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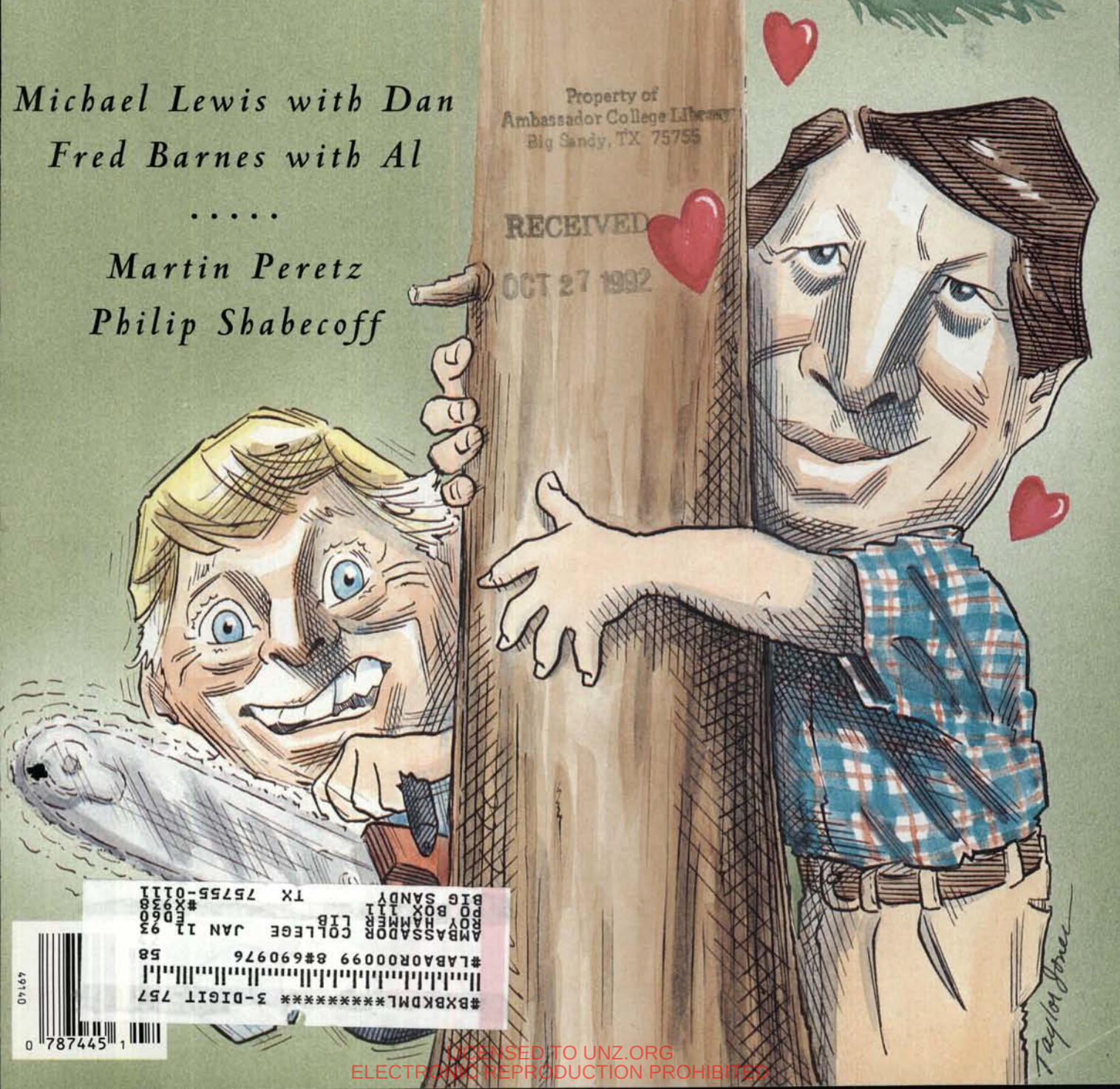

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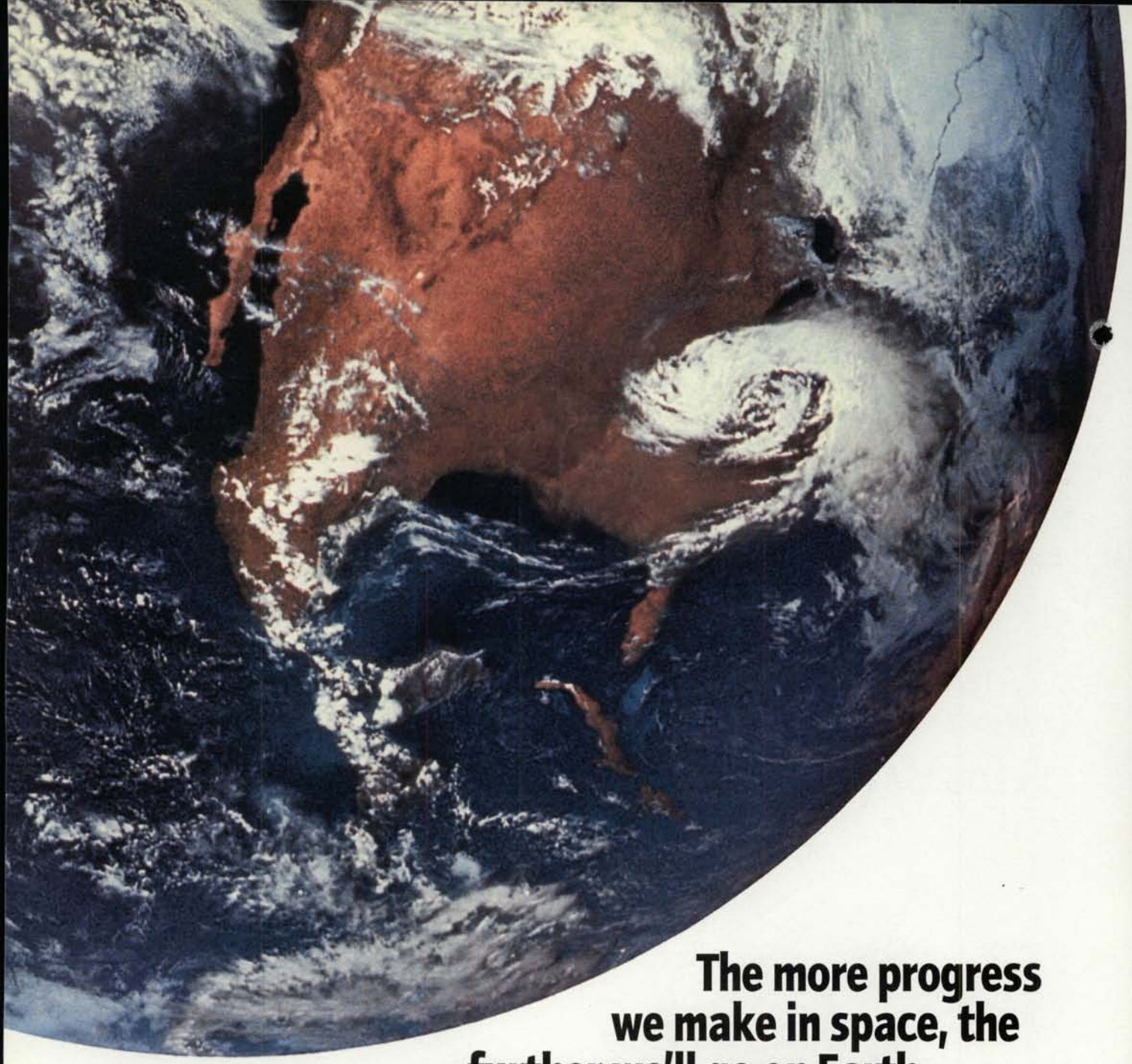

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A Weekly Journal of Opinion

OCTOBER 19, 1992

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,057

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Cover by Taylor Jones for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 19, 22, and 25.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Allen's woody, Humberto's bodyguard, Schiff's defense, &c.

6 **MICHAEL KINSLEY** TRB: 178 AND COUNTING There he goes again.

7 **THE EDITORS** BURST OF ENERGY Will Congress finally pass a decent energy bill?

8 **NOTEBOOK** Bush and owls, Perot and King, Clinton and the *Post*, &c.

9 **ANNA HUSARSKA** SARAJEVO POSTCARD: STAGE FRIGHT Off-off-off-Broadway.

10 **DANIEL COGAN** ALL MY CHILDREN How cheesy T.V. sells birth control to Kenyans.

12 **SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL** HE'S BA-A-CK! Friday the 13th, Part IX: Ross's Revenge.

16 **HERMANN GILIOMEE** MANDELA'S MESS Why the African National Congress is going to pieces—instead of coming to power.

19 **MARTIN PERETZ** THE OTHER AL Private notes on a public man.

20 **PHILIP SHABECOFF** GREEN GIANT Al Gore's sane environmentalism.

22 **FRED BARNES** WHAT IT TAKES Gore the author wants to transform modern consciousness. Gore the politician wants to get elected.

25 **MICHAEL LEWIS** THE BOY IN THE BUBBLE On the road with Dan Quayle.

30 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: PERSONAL AND OTHERWISE *Husbands and Wives*, more scenes from a New York marriage; *Hero*, more entertaining than it should be.

32 **JED PERL** THE ART NOBODY KNOWS Why you won't find the best artists in the much hyped art world, and who some of them are.

40 **RICHARD PIPES** THE TOADY *The System* by Georgi Arbatov

42 **JACQUELINE OSHEROW** POEM *Relocation*

43 **JAMES M. MCPHERSON** PATTERNS OF PREJUDICE *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* by Tyler Anbinder

47 **ALEXANDER STAR** LESS THAN HERO *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt

50 **WESTON KOSOVA** WASHINGTON DIARIST: THE CHOSEN

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 207, Number 17, Issue 4,057, October 19, 1992. (Printed in the U.S. on September 30, 1992.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 6 & 13, July 13 & 20, Aug. 17 & 24, and Sept. 7 & 14, 1992) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic/National Review joint advertising (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling).

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(ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Mama Mia

To the editors:

In his defense of Woody Allen ("The Very Last Lover," September 28), Michael Lewis quotes Lionel Trilling regarding the "breaking of the taboo about the sexual availability of very young girls. . . ."

But Professor Trilling was talking about *literature*—Nabokov's *Lolita*—not about *life*. Trilling would be among the first to maintain that barrier as necessary for the maintenance of civilization. Does understanding Raskolnikov mean that every marginal young intellectual can go out and commit murder?

Mr. Lewis has spent so much of his life dealing with "funny money" that the distinctions seem to have escaped him.

EPHRAIM ABULAFA
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Soon-Yi Previn is not merely "the adopted daughter of [Woody Allen's] former girlfriend." She is also the social sibling of both Farrow's and Allen's step-, adopted, and "biological" children. This is true even though Farrow and Allen never married. Many liberals (like me) deplore the fact that Allen seems to regard incest as occurring only among those with genetic kinship. Thus he denies any social responsibility based upon his temporary assumption of the paternal role. Lewis supports Allen's claims to exemption from social fatherhood: his relationship with his "stepdaughter" is permitted on grounds of "passion" because there is no "biological" connection and she is now, after all, 21 years old. Feminists should support her assertion of her own "passion." O.K.: they are equally consenting and passionate adults.

But upon what grounds, then, can Allen claim custody of any of his children, "biological" or otherwise? Custody is inherently a "social" arrangement; it overrides both passion and genetics, as Soon-Yi's own adoption attests. Whether or not she and her siblings were themselves the products of passionate love is irrelevant to the requirements of their upbringing: children need parents, whether "biological" or "social," who, in the best interests of the kids they are trying to raise, discover in themselves the ability to defer the gratification of whatever passing passions they may experience.

Obviously, I fault Allen (and his evident epigone, Lewis), but I also raise questions about Farrow, who presumably knew something about birthing and mothering when she teamed up with Allen in this regard. I further question the agencies or lawyers through whom so many of Farrow's children were adopted. Upon what grounds were decisions made to entrust all these kids to *her* custody, careless as she apparently is about who might serve as their "fathers"? Were these professionals any more sound in their judgments than the much-maligned New York City social workers who arrange foster care, or only much better paid?

JUDITH H. BALFE
Montclair, New Jersey

To the editors:

Yes, we are a bunch of puritans in America—albeit smut-loving hypocrites as well. But there's another kind of romance, one born of honor and sacrifice: such as not humiliating your mate of twelve years, or not delivering a crushing blow to your mother. When betrayal enters the door, romance goes out the window and into the grime.

After all, what is your favorite American romance? Mine is a tearful Ilse parting with an honorable Rick at the Casablanca airport—a great love sacrificed for a nobler cause. Even Woody Allen was impressed enough to adopt the theme and scene in his *Play It Again, Sam.* On the other hand, I thoroughly enjoyed Lewis's swipe at Newt.

DONNA MARXER
New York, New York

Vanity unfair

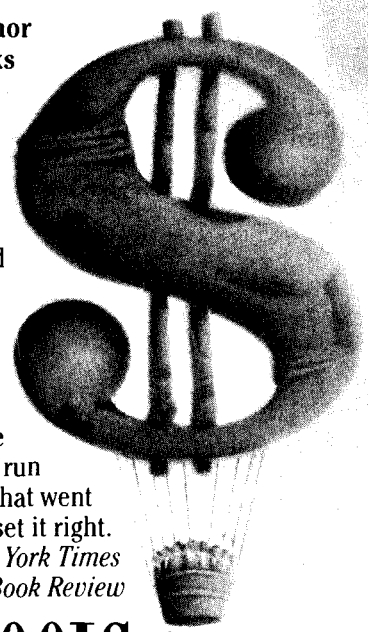
To the editors:

Maybe you've been hanging around with the politicians too long. Your wild-eyed misrepresentation of my *Vanity Fair* article on Leni Riefenstahl, in which you use quotes pulled slyly out of context and cite arguments I never made, helps one understand how Bill Clinton must feel when the Republicans gas on about his (chimerical) 128 tax hikes ("Notebook," September 7 & 14).

You pretend, for instance, that I'm praising Hitler when I list the social initiatives he undertook during his first four years in power. But you sneakily leave out the preceding sentence, in which I list the horrors he committed during the same period, and you leave out the context, which is not, of course, about how enlightened Hitler was, but about how he came to be so widely supported in prewar Germany and much of the rest of the world. You ignore it when I call Riefenstahl's claims—often the very ones you say I accept—"impossible" or "improbable" or "beyond justification," when I assert that "she was blind [to what was

The bestselling author of *Citizen Cohn* asks

Who's been taking American business for a ride?



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happening in Germany] probably because she didn't want to see," when I characterize her arrangement with Hitler as "a pact with the devil," and so on. The assertions I do make on her behalf are documented; you dismiss them as "absurd," but you don't supply any facts to buttress your argument because you have none.

Most of all, you seem incensed by my praise for *Triumph of the Will*—as though my appreciation of its appalling mastery were unique to me and a few other card-carrying fascists, as though I were not, as my article says, "revolted by what it celebrates," as though filmmakers and critics from Martin Scorsese to Pauline Kael hadn't already reached the same heretofore unstartling conclusion.

One more thing. Your smirky "Memo to Graydon Carter" reflects the same careful reading habits you deployed on my article. As dozens of newspapers and magazines have reported since early July, I departed *Vanity Fair* at the same time Tina Brown did and simultaneously joined the staff of *The New Yorker.*

STEPHEN SCHIFF
New York, New York

Czechs out

To the editors:

Why did Jacques Rupnik's otherwise excellent article on Slovakia ("Czech Off," August 17 & 24) fail to predict the division of Czechoslovakia that occurred two weeks later? Because Rupnik did not identify whom the new Slovak government really represents. Slovak Premier Vladimir Meciar won the June 1992 elections with a lot of help from his friends—the elite of the Communist bureaucracy. Whatever might be good for the Slovak people, Mr. Meciar must do what is good for his allies.

Take the Slovak media, which the "old structures" are taking back. The largest daily newspapers, leftovers from the old regime, vigorously promoted Mr. Meciar in the elections. Only *Smena* ("Change") has dared to break up the cozy party and investigate Meciar's rather murky past. Meciar has therefore promised to "liquidate" the problem.

Or take industry. The Czechoslovak government pursued "coupon privatization," a scheme that doles out shares in industry to citizens at artificially low prices. Like stocks, the shares can then be placed in the hands of investment funds. But the plan threatens the old "experts," the bureaucrats of ministries and factories. They might lose their jobs if investors, not they, managed restructuring. Meciar has therefore promised to scrap the federal scheme.

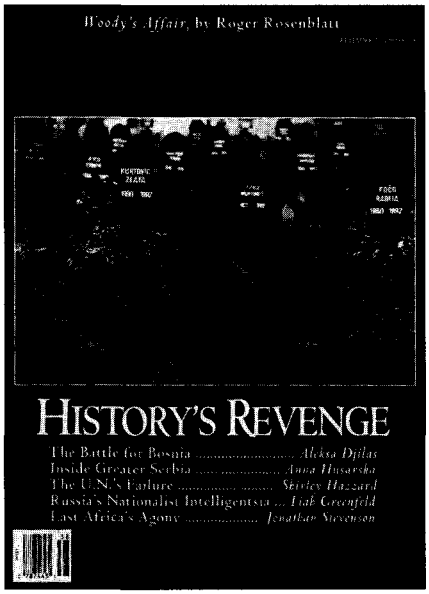
A federal Czechoslovak government, bound by its agreements with the European Community, would not allow Meciar to stamp out dissent or attempts to reform industry. But while such agreements are under review, the Slovak government can do what it likes. When predicting how governments bound to the "old structures" will act, it is the interests of this class, not the interests of the ordinary citizens, that must be taken into account.

CHANDLER ROSENBERGER
Bratislava, Slovakia

Road warrior

To the editors:

Anna Husarska's excellent article "Roadkill" (August 31), on the murder of Jean Paul Genie in Managua by the bodyguards


Woody's Affair, by Roger Rosenblatt
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of Humberto Ortega, lacked only one thing: a bit of historical background. During the 1980s the nine ruling Sandinista comandantes traveled in armed caravans, ignoring all traffic signals and often causing jams and accidents. Any car that tried to pass a caravan was assumed to contain a potential assassin. Humberto Ortega, implicated in the case Husarska discusses, was particularly fearful of assassins.

One earlier incident that caused the Sandinistas real embarrassment occurred in 1982 when Ortega's guards shot up the minibus of the chief of the Soviet military mission in Managua, though no one was injured. Humberto apologized profusely but explained that he could never tell when the CIA might strike at him from a passing vehicle.

Usually the guards fired a warning burst from their automatic weapons, followed by blasts into the car itself. After the 1982 incident, phosphorescent gloves were sometimes used to wave off vehicles, though this was not always done and didn't always work. Incredibly, this policy continued for Ortega after the Sandinistas were overwhelmingly rejected in the 1990 election.

WILLIAM RATLIFF
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

Wrong with the wind

To the editors:

A peculiarity of Susan Sontag's book *The Volcano Lover* that Richard Jenkyns's review quoted but didn't comment on is her calling the mistral a "hot wind" ("Eruptions," September 7 & 14). In the Larousse definition—"vent violent froid"—the operative word is "froid" ("cold"). It is the icy blast that sweeps down the Rhone Valley from the Alps in midwinter, keeping all but a few idiotic tourists (once including me) off the streets of Provence's hilltop villages.

RENÉ H. HIMEL
Paris, France

Off guard

To the editors:

In the fall of 1968 I had recently completed my first year of law school when the government decided to draft graduate students. I decided to join the Indiana National Guard in order to complete law school before serving my country. I contacted the National Guard in Greencastle, Terre Haute, and Indianapolis, Indiana, and was told that there was a waiting list of no fewer than 800 persons in each unit and that it was therefore impossible to "join the guards." I was drafted and served as a sergeant in the infantry in Vietnam. After seeing many of my comrades wounded and half of my sister platoon's personnel killed and maimed by a 155mm booby trap, I understand why Dan Quayle thinks so highly of his Pulliam family values.

JAMES R. EARNSHAW
Kingman, Indiana

Predictions

To the editors:

In comparing George Bush to Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter ("No Truman," September 28), Fred Barnes makes the statement: "Like Carter, Bush sounds apocalyptic about the fate of America should his opponent win the White House." Seems to me that there's one whopping difference between Mr. Bush and Mr. Carter in that respect: Carter was right!

LEE W. DOUGLAS
San Diego, California

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FROM WASHINGTON

178 and counting

Several readers have risen to my challenge to name a lie by Bill Clinton as brazen as George Bush's assertion that Clinton raised taxes 128 times while he, Bush, raised taxes once. The most popular nominee is Clinton's claim that Bush, if re-elected, will slash Medicare and Social Security. Meanwhile Bush's campaign manager, Fred Malek, has published a list of 128 Clinton tax and fee increases that, he says, vindicates Bush's original sally.

It's true that Bush has promised loudly and often that he will never cut either Medicare or Social Security benefits. Clinton's claim otherwise is based on two things: first, a mathematical calculation based on Bush's other campaign promises; and second, a list of entitlement cut "examples" that was part of Bush's July "Mid-Session Review" of the 1993 budget.

Bush has promised an across-the-board tax cut of uncertain size. He has promised a health care reform plan his own people cost out at $35 billion extra a year. He has promised tax credits for private school tuition, a multibillion-dollar worker retraining program, and so on. Just the other day he promised $20 billion in new help for small business. And of course he has promised to eliminate the $300 billion-plus annual deficit in five years.

It is Clinton's contention that all this can't be done—while sticking to Bush's defense plans and paying interest on the national debt—without deep cuts in Social Security and Medicare, which are almost half the remaining budget. Clinton asserts with mock specificity that Bush's promises add up to a trillion dollars that must be pruned over five years. That's a contrived number, but not an unreasonable one. It doesn't even figure in a balanced budget—just enough deficit reduction to cover Bush's silly tax return check-off gimmick. But however you do the math, Clinton's basic reasoning is unchallengeable.

As for the list of "example" entitlement cuts, budget director Richard Darman has said these were merely "illustrative," and "inclusion of a particular option here does not necessarily imply support for such an option." Understandably, since the "options" include stiff cuts in Medicare, veterans' benefits, student loans, and so on.

Trouble is, Bush is trying to have it both ways about this list. At a speech in August, he held up the very document and said, "Here is a Mid-Session Review, and it tells exactly and specifically how to get this deficit down." In his September 17 campaign rally speech ("This is not a rally speech...") in Enid, Oklahoma, Bush said that Clinton has "proposed only about $7 billion in cuts in mandatory spending over five years.... What I proposed cut it by $300 billion."

What Bush actually has proposed is a "cap" on entitlement programs (except Social Security, natch), limiting their growth to inflation plus a factor to cover the growth of the beneficiary population. Bush likes to make this sound painless. But his own list of "options" proves otherwise, and the way Bush is running away from these "options" proves it even more. Even if every "option" on the list were enacted, we would still be only three-quarters of the way to Bush's goal of a $300 billion cut.

Darman is certainly right that Bush does not embrace every "option" on the list. One listed option, for example, is elimination of the export subsidy program for farmers. On the campaign trail, Bush has promised to expand this program. But Bush's budget calls for across-the-board cuts in entitlement programs if his $300 billion savings goal isn't met. Such across-the-board chopping would certainly savage Medicare. If Bush has a list of $300 billion in entitlement cuts that would avoid cutting Medicare, veterans' benefits, etc., he is keeping it a secret. In reality, no such list is possible.

Now, I don't believe for a minute that Bush would really slash Social Security and Medicare, and neither does Bill Clinton. But that's because I don't believe all these other promises Bush has made (and neither does Clinton). For my exquisite taste, it would have been better if Clinton had accused Bush of making mathematically incompatible promises, rather than of secretly planning to gut old people's benefits.

While we're in dreamland, we might even wish that Clinton would endorse some of the unpleasant options on

continued on page 49

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 19, 1992

BURST OF ENERGY

Some eighteen months ago, when George Bush unveiled his National Energy Strategy, most people were able to restrain their enthusiasm. (See "Waste of Energy" by Gregg Easterbrook, TNR, March 18, 1991.) The proposal was long on favors to oil and coal interests, short on market logic and conservation. But in recent months the energy strategy has mutated into a progressive bill worth passing. Democrats will be tempted to put off a final vote with Congress about to recess, to deny President Bush a domestic policy achievement so close to the election. They should not succumb to the temptation. The bill represents something of a breakthrough.

Gone from the bill are higher mileage standards for cars and oil exploration in Alaska's National Arctic Wildlife Refuge, hand-grenade issues for the right and left respectively. Included now are real energy conservation plans; electric utility deregulation; equalization between mass transit allowances and the tax breaks that subsidize parking; global warming provisions; simplified nuclear licensing; and other advances.

On energy conservation—a central aim of any serious energy strategy—the bill extends to the rest of the country California's energy-efficiency standards for appliances and buildings. Through the 1980s California reduced its net energy consumption even as its numbers of cars and people rose. By adopting this model, national electricity demand will decline, conserving fossil fuels and holding down the world oil price as U.S. economic output expands. The bill also helps utilities promote energy efficiency, and encourages the public commissions that control them to put conservation before new production. And then there are new national water-flow standards for plumbing, which will lower the power needed for pumping, treating, and heating water. (At this writing, conferees had yet to agree on the issue of which plumbing fixtures would be covered. "The Senate will go along with showerheads but is opposed to urinals," one negotiator noted.)

The bill also marks a blow to electric power monopolies. In the future utility deregulation may have greater impact than airline and telephone decontrol combined. Society's total cost for electricity should be driven down by competition among generators, while entrepreneurs will be freed to attack the power monopoly with energy-saving new ideas. Jesse Helms has threatened to filibuster the bill to protect his inefficient home-state Carolina Power & Light—as good an indication as any that the bill is worth passing.

On measures to combat global warming, the bill also represents a milestone. Since the Earth Summit in Rio, many large corporations have been leery of cutting greenhouse emissions voluntarily, fearing they could end up in a worse position if mandatory controls come later. Their later cuts would come from a smaller base, in the same way that a law to end obesity by requiring everyone to lose twenty pounds would be harder on the slender than the well-padded. The bill removes this excuse by allowing corporations to register current output of greenhouse gases and, in the event of mandatory controls, receive credits for voluntary cuts. This measure could allow the United States to meet Rio's first-round greenhouse goals more quickly than first thought—and with scant dislocation.

To the dismay of the left, the energy bill provides for simpler licensing of new nuclear power stations. No new plant will be commissioned in the coming decade, if only because conservation investments are currently much less expensive than reactor construction. But a decade from now that may change, and by then a new category of reactors, incorporating passive-safety and waste-reducing features, should be ready. (See "Safe Nuclear Power" by Lawrence M. Lidsky, TNR, December 28, 1987.) It is in everyone's interest to let them be licensed in a rational manner, if only to replace old, coal-fired power stations.

The energy bill is the perfect opportunity for liberals to drop their irrational fear of nuclear energy. Power reactors emit no greenhouse gases or other air pollution. Worker fatalities in the nuclear power business have been nearly nonexistent for twenty years. The coal industry, by contrast, reliably kills 200-300 workers annually, mainly in mining accidents. Another consideration: power reactors are the best place in which to destroy the radioactive cores being removed from nuclear warheads by the United States and the old USSR.

In this year of Capitol Hill embarrassment and White House excuses, the energy bill provides the many departing congressmen and the perhaps departing president a rare chance to enact a law that will create many general benefits at no one's expense. It will be a deep indictment of the system if politics as usual prevents this from happening. •

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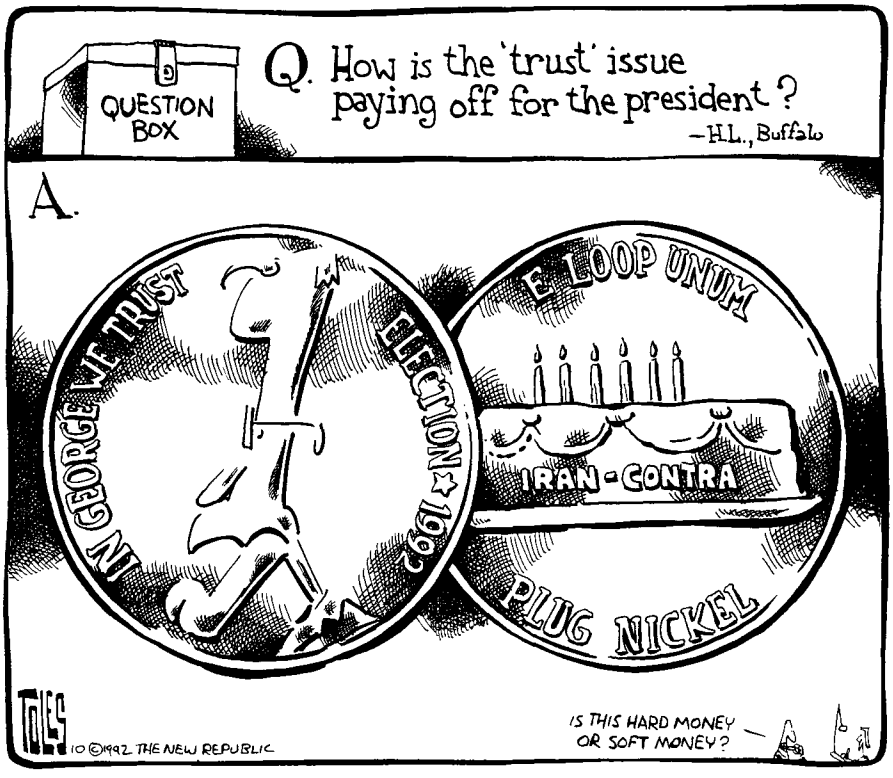
NOTEBOOK

BUSHISM OF THE WEEK: "You talk about the environment—take a look at that Arkansas River. And I'll have more to say about that in a minute. We've even seen some chickens along the way. Here's one back here. But I can't figure out if that chicken is talking about the draft—I can't figure that out or maybe he's talking about that Arkansas River again where they're dumping that—I've got to be careful here—that fecal—some kind of bacteria into the river. Too much from the chicken."—at a rally in Grand Blanc, Michigan, September 27



BUSH LIE #324: The president had quite an arresting image on September 14 when he addressed lumber workers in Colville, Washington. Bush spoke of the death of neighboring Forks, a town where all the lumber mills had gone away, forcing the closure of movie theaters and car dealerships, not to mention doubling the amount of domestic violence. All of this, Bush suggested, was due to the spotted owl. "Forks is in crisis for a simple reason," Bush said. "It's time to put people before owls." Alas, like so many of the images from the GOP campaign, this one is too good to be true. As Bush knows, the sawmills of Forks closed in May 1990, a month before any owls were declared "endangered," much less before any logging bans were considered. The main reasons for the decline are Japan's increased importation of unfinished instead of finished lumber, the recession-induced decline of home-building, and the flight of logging companies leaving the region for the lower wages, the easier terrain, and the better climate of the Southeast.

THE UNSCOOP: In two front-page stories, *The New York Times* (September 26) and *The Washington Post* (September 27) printed what they portrayed as startling new information that contradicted George Bush's assertions that he was unaware arms were being traded for the release of American hostages in the Iran-contra affair. The newspapers, whose reports generated a frenzy of television stories, quoted former Reagan National Security Council aide Howard Teicher as telling then-Vice President George Bush in 1986 during several White House briefings that the United States was selling weapons to Iran in exchange for hostages. Some journalists asked Teicher why he was coming forward now with this new information. His response: "Because you guys called me. Besides, what I've said has been on the record for five years." Indeed, since 1987 Teicher has stated numerous times, in interviews and published testimony, that he and others explained to Bush (as well as to Ronald Reagan) that arms were being sold to Iran to secure the release of the hostages. Until now, journalists have mostly ignored abundant evidence, in the Tower Commission report and elsewhere, that undercut Bush's assertions he was "out of the loop." Well, better late than never.

NO SOUNDBITE: Among the speeches given during this campaign, two stand out: Clinton's subtle speech at Notre Dame and Al Gore's attack last Tuesday on Bush's prewar policy toward Iraq. Gore's was particularly fine. The subject was risky (the public is still evenly split on Bush's Iraq policy), and Clinton's waffling on the Gulf war makes it especially dangerous. Yet Gore made a superb case that Bush's Saddam-coddling was not merely the most reckless policy pursued in the last four years, but was of a piece with Bush-Baker's entire domestic and foreign agenda: "He not only struck the match; he poured gasoline on the flames. So give him credit for calling in the fire department, but understand who started the blaze." This is not the stuff of which ten-point leads are made. But it had the refreshing advantage of being the truth.

PEROT SUCK-UP WATCH:

LARRY KING: I don't want to end on a negative note, but I'm told by the controller—and I didn't see this—that Mr. Rollins earlier—and you should respond, because it's going to be in the press—said that you offered him—on *Crossfire* tonight, if I got this right—to buy his silence for $500,000.

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ROSS PEROT: That's not true.
KING: Hush money. In other words, you never offered?
PEROT: Oh, this is a never—
KING: I just want to get it straight from the other side.
PEROT:—never-ending saga from a man I've barely ever spent any time with. And I think the less—See, I've kind of put this—This is a waste of time thing. You have to bring it up, and I understand it.
KING: I just wanted to clear your side of it.

—"Larry King Live," September 28

CLINTON SUCK-UP WATCH:

Clinton's Lead Appears Solid, May Be Growing

—*The Washington Post*, September 22, page 1, above the fold, reporting on a *Post* poll showing Clinton with a lead of twenty-one points

Clinton Slide in Survey Shows Perils of Polling

—*The Washington Post*, September 29, page A6, reporting on a *Post* poll showing Clinton with a lead of nine points •

SARAJEVO POSTCARD

STAGE FRIGHT

By Anna Husarska

The theater is located in war-torn Sarajevo. It is called the War Theater of Sarajevo. The play is performed in a shelter. Its title is "The Shelter." It was prepared amid a fierce discussion of the dilemma facing artists in today's Sarajevo: Should they fight at the front or continue their artistic tasks? And this dilemma is discussed in the play.

The solution came with the performance itself. Opening night of the War Theater was on September 4, a month later than planned because a bomb had landed on the building and destroyed the generator that provides the electricity. The house—or rather the basement shelter—was full: all sixty armchairs were taken, although there was no publicity for the event for fear the Serbs might choose the performance as an opportunity to bomb it, just as they do with the markets and—notoriously—with the bread lines. Admission was free for Sarajevans; a donation (a pack of Marlboros) was suggested from foreign journalists. It was standing room only in the tiny shelter, and the audience spilled out into the corridor. There the noise of mortar bombs and the rattle of machine-gun fire could be heard more clearly than the actors' words.

But real-life special effects blended easily into the action on the stage. On the second night the comandante of the special defense units of Sarajevo, Dragan Vikić (mentioned in the script), was sitting in the first row, machine gun on his lap, laughing with the rest of the audience—because "The Shelter" is a comedy, and a good one at that.

Written by a Bosnian playwright, Safet Plakalo, and directed by Dubravko Bibanović, "The Shelter" deals with the routine of life in besieged Sarajevo. In the opening scene the Actor (Zoran Bečić) and the Director (Miodrag Trifunov) discuss their different ways of dealing with the war: the former is overwhelmed by the daily difficulties of living without electricity, with intermittent lack of water, with constant shortages of food, and especially with the danger of being killed. He has given up all artistic activities and is obsessed by the war. The Director, on the other hand, believes that only by sticking to his art can an artist resist the war.

In comes a profiteer, Hajro, who supplies the shelter inhabitants with various staples and takes away their precious belongings: batteries get traded for family jewelry, medicine for paintings, cigarettes for German marks. During the performance, Snježana, a 28-year-old dentistry student who works as a driver for foreign journalists, whispered to me that her family obtained batteries in a similar way, and I have been offered a few luxury items like an old Leica camera (which I could use) and makeup (which I never use) by black market traders who hang around the lobby of Sarajevo's Holiday Inn.

The Bosnian authorities are represented in the play by a bureaucrat in blue uniform, called in the program brochure "ŠSMZ" (poking fun at the still prevailing Communist mania for clumsy acronyms, this stands for "Chief of All Municipal Community Shelters"): his chest is covered with plastic accreditation cards (exactly like the ones dangling on the chests of real-life Bosnian officials), and he intends to introduce some order in the shelter—a daily agenda for waking up, for washing, shaving, the shifts of guards at the entrance, etc. He is served a few glasses of plum brandy by Ms. Hrastić, another shelter occupant, and quickly collapses, stone drunk.

Enter Mina Hauzen, a neighbor (played by Jasna Diklić), who says she is the niece of Baron Munchausen. She fantasizes about meeting with Radovan Karadzić (the leader of the Bosnian Serbs and the most hated person in Sarajevo). She makes the audience laugh to tears, and then commands an instantaneous silence when she describes her visit to a hospital where a friend invited her to make herself comfortable on his bed. "Go ahead, you can sit, I don't have legs anymore," he said to her. The story is true: she was describing her visit to Nermin Tulić, an actor (who belongs to the company), after his legs were amputated as a consequence of heavy shrapnel wounds. He is not the only victim in the company: actress Deana Civljan Hajndl lost a leg, and three others were wounded. The sound technician, Vuk Vrhovec, was killed one month before the opening night.

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The company consists of 170 people (fifteen are actors), most of whom worked before the war in one of three Sarajevo professional theaters—Youth, Chamber, and National, all now closed. The repertoire for the 1992-93 season, as announced in "The Shelter"'s program, will include two plays for children, three dramas and comedies, three poetical performances, and six new plays, including "War Cabaret" and "Drama from the Life of a Soldier in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

The last line in "The Shelter" is pronounced by the Actor, who is still wondering whether it is possible to produce a play during the war: "We have everything: the script, the actors, the decorations, but what about the audience? Theater cannot exist without an audience." At this point the lights go on and the actors applaud the audience for coming to see the play. In return the company gets a standing ovation.

The mutual applause is well deserved. Coming to act and coming to watch are both forms of resistance: the street leading to the shelter is within range of sniper fire, so the risk of being killed is the same for the audience and the company—and nobody in his right mind goes out after darkness.

Following the second performance of "The Shelter," the company threw a party with wine and cognac. Sarajevo's most famous jeweler, Fahrudin Sofić, offered the playwright, director, actors, and stage designer little golden fleurs de lys (symbols of Bosnia and Herzegovina) to put in their lapels. The theater has produced its own button with the stylized letters "SARTR" standing for "Sarajevski Ratni Teatar" or Sarajevo War Theater, and everyone in the audience received one. Dragan Vikić pinned his buttons next to his plastic I.D. card.

As the Serbs bombed the town, some seventy people were there sipping their drinks, the women complementing each other on their dresses, men speculating about how the Sarajevo soccer team will do if it ever manages to get out of the besieged town. Knowing that I was living in the States, many artists surrounded me, eager to discuss Broadway and New York gossip. Is "Cats" still playing? Has Woody Allen divorced Mia Farrow? Could I please pass on an invitation to Madonna to come to Sarajevo because they all adore her here? And all wanted to describe their artistic projects. Apart from the plans of the War Theater, I heard about the Flowers of Love, a theater company that performs for children in hospitals and orphanages, a Croatian Friendship Society, which was organizing an evening of poetry, an art exhibition that was to open soon, and a jazz concert that was scheduled.

The next day, one of the two papers still being published in Sarajevo, *Oslobodenje* (Liberation) ran a review of the play. The author, S. Krsmanović, pointed out that "during World War II the theaters in Sarajevo continued as usual. In this war—as we see—it is very different, so we must conclude that the Germans were gentlemen aggressors as compared to the present ones, who do not let us enjoy theater, unless we do it as an act of resistance." •

Family planning and trash T.V.

ALL MY CHILDREN

By Dan Cogan

Believe it or not, there's good news about trash culture. In fact, the soap opera, television's most degenerate medium, may just save the world. At a time when critics whine about American culture sinking into a televised wasteland, family planning and population control advocates are using soaps to curb population growth in the developing world. Broadcast during prime time on television and radio, the programs try to convince audiences to use contraceptives and even to desire fewer children.

The two major nonprofit groups sponsoring projects, Population Communications International (PCI) and Population Communications Services (PCS), trumpet their manipulative designs. "Towards the Use of Commercial Television," a widely circulated pamphlet by the Institute for Communications Research, a Mexican-based media research group, is replete with statements like: "We think it is of fundamental importance to understand the intellectual, emotive, and instinctive areas [of the brain], and the processes inherent to each one, to be able to appeal to them through television stimulation, and thereby achieve the change of both individual and social worldview." Roger Pereira, producer of a PCI-sponsored soap opera running in India, boasts his show "will be manipulative, and it is what a lot of dictatorial regimes tried to do, but rather badly. We're doing it very subtly through entertainment."

The programs' not-so-subtle strategy relies on three types of characters: "good," "bad," and, most importantly, "searching"—the ones with whom the viewer is supposed to identify. Over the course of the narrative, the good characters, who lead economically secure and happy lives because they have planned small families, convince the searchers, who begin by being suspicious of contraception, that family planning is beneficial, even honorable. Pop songs—often male/female duets—condense the typical structure, with both singers representing good characters telling a story to the searching audience or with one playing the good role and the other the searcher.

According to PCI and PCS, the shows are working. PCI purports that after the radio soap "Ushikwapo Shikamana" (Hold Tight to the One Who Holds You) and television soap "Tushuriane" (Let's Talk About It) were on from 1988-89, Kenya's fertility rate dropped from 8.1 to 6.73 children per family and population growth fell from 4.1 percent to 3.6 percent. PCS, primarily funded by USAID, points to a fifty-two-episode radio drama titled "You Reap

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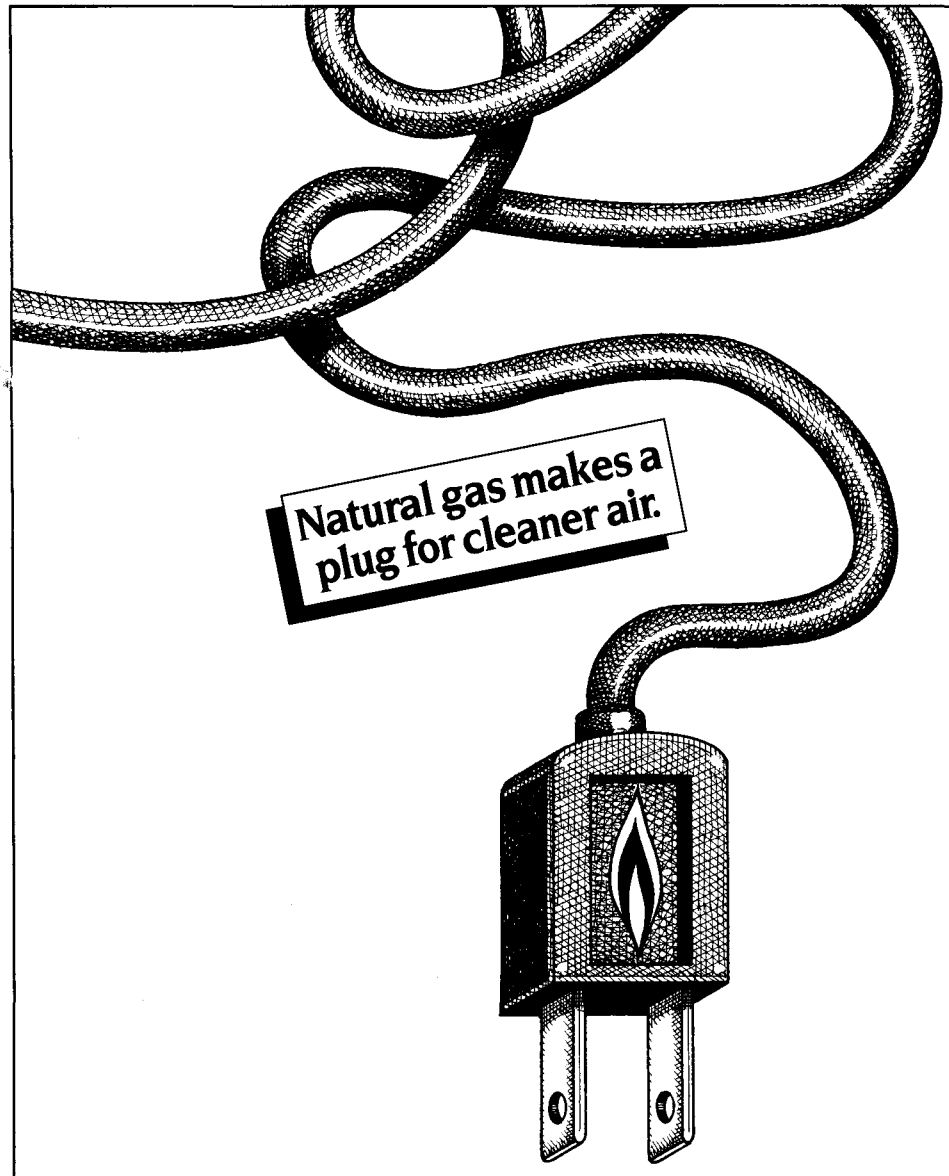

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What You Sow," the centerpiece of its Zimbabwean "Male Motivation Project," which also included pamphlets and "motivational" talks. Fifty-five percent of randomly selected survey respondents were "exposed" to the campaign; 80.5 percent of them said the show changed their attitudes, and smaller numbers said it led them to discuss family planning with their partner or to use contraceptives.

PCS's best-known effort, the Mexican "Communication for Young People Project," consisted of two pop songs and a marketing fusillade of music videos, television commercials, radio spots, double-sided posters, and 45-r.p.m. records. "Cuando Estemos Juntos" (When We're Together), the first song released, hit number one on the Mexican pop charts; "Detente" (Wait), released a few months afterward, made it to the top twenty. PCS estimates that the songs had about a million hours of free airtime, in addition to an outpouring of press coverage. Surveys showed that, when prompted, respondents' recall of the songs was 78 percent for "Detente" and 98 percent for "Cuando Estemos Juntos." A PCS/USAID study discovered a strong correlation between recall of the songs and sexual attitudes: 34 percent of those who could not recall "Cuandos Estemos Juntos" replied it was all right for couples who simply "like one another" to have sex, whereas only 10 percent of those who did remember it thought so.

Of course, since the evaluations are packaged by the sponsor groups, they inevitably exaggerate the shows' influence. Discovering a link between recall of a song and attitude toward sexual activity does not, for example, prove the song responsible for the listener's opinion. Those who already advocate birth control, postponing sex, and limiting family size will tend to be the ones who notice and remember the songs and shows. Those who don't won't listen. Furthermore, the evaluations often steal credit from the social forces that spur change with or without the media's help. Gary Merrit, who worked closely with PCI as a USAID population officer in India and Kenya, points out that "there are two background factors that are absolutely critical that family planning people don't talk about or think very much about but have been true of every recorded instance of modern rapid fertility decline. Those are a much broader basis of primary health care facilities and ... of primary education." In Kenya, these forces, compounded by hard times and a severe drought, led the government to stop offering free education and health care. "Men began to look around and say, 'How are we going to afford fees?' " An ensuing decline in the fertility rate began long before any programming hit the airwaves. As for the population growth rate, official USAID statistics do not demonstrate anything close to the drop PCI claims. PCS's analyses are marred by similar sleights-of-hand, including using the term "exposed" to refer to those Zimbabweans who *remember* having heard the soap. Those who don't are counted as never having heard it.

But statistics don't tell the whole story. The accounts of those who have been in countries airing programs suggest that once a country has begun to modernize, shows do help to establish the traditionally taboo subjects of birth control and family planning as appropriate for public and private discussion. The aggressive marketing strategies and the publicity the projects generate further contribute to breaking the cultural ice. And as the availability of contraceptives spreads, cultural acceptability becomes the central issue for family planning advocates to address. There's no use supplying condoms if people won't use them.

Mark Lediard, senior vice president of the Academy for Educational Development, explains that "like any tool, it needs to be used for the right job. It clearly does a great job in building awareness and contributing to the shift in norms." Even Merrit agrees. "You have to think of [contraceptive adoption] like a catalytic process.... All the elements have to come into play ... to keep boosting the information channels and the motivation channels. That's why this program in Kenya, coming on a solid foundation ... of fertility already declining was the right thing at the right time." Trash T.V. may justify its existence after all.

DAN COGAN is a reporter for the *New York Observer.*

Ross's revenge.

HE'S BA-A-CK!

By Sidney Blumenthal

Ross Perot's vast wealth has allowed him to honor his compulsions nearly his entire adult life. So when the panjandrums of both presidential campaigns journeyed to the Doubletree Hotel in Dallas to bow and scrape before him on CNN, he reached the highest point of his mercurial power. Suddenly the balance of the campaign was destabilized, and the destabilized person stood at its fulcrum. Perot, whose detestation of Bush is matched by none, had delivered to Bush's campaign a means of potentially splitting the anti-Bush vote. He had gained a temporary control to appease a temporary compulsion.

The conjuring of Perot's power trip took place at a "convention" of straggler volunteers and fifty state coordinators (many on his payroll), marshaled by the exquisitely named director, Orson Swindle, who claimed he would organize the country by "burst fax." (Since July, Perot had spent $7 million preparing for this media event, even hiring signature collectors through the want ads to get his name on all fifty states' ballots.) Announcing at his press conference that he was off to see "the volunteers," who were stored in sterilized isolation from the press, Perot said: "I got to return to reality." With this, he had struck more than a campaign theme.

The paramount issue for Perot has always been com-

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Flip-Flops and Pork

BY ALBERT SHANKER, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

There has been a lot of discussion about George Bush's reversals on various issues. One of his biggest flip-flops is in regard to using public money to pay tuition for kids in private and parochial schools. *Now*, Mr. Bush is a big supporter of the idea—in fact, it is the centerpiece of his education program. Not so long ago, he strongly opposed it.

In March 1989, when a youngster asked him whether parents who were sending a child to private school should get a tax break, the President said the budget deficit would not allow it:

> [We] can't afford to do that....Everybody should support the public school system and then, if on top of that your parents think that they want to shell out in addition to the tax money, tuition money, that's their right...But I don't think they should get a break for that....It is the obligation of all taxpayers to support a public education system. (*Chicago Tribune*, March 30, 1989)

As Mr. Bush himself used to say, We "can't afford to do that."

The President's answer didn't make the headlines because it was consistent with everything he had said and done. Soon after he was elected, Mr. Bush held a White House conference on choice; only public school choice came up. And when he met with the governors at the Education Summit, there is no evidence that he even mentioned the issue of using public money to send kids to private school.

How can we explain Mr. Bush's change of mind? If we could not "afford" to help pay the tuition of kids going to private and parochial schools in 1989 when the annual budget deficit was $133.5 billion, how can we afford it in 1992 when the deficit will be over $300 billion?

We probably don't have to look for any profound explanation of Mr. Bush's about-face. He needs votes, and he undoubtedly hopes that, by talking up vouchers, he'll attract a bloc of private-school parents. If he succeeds, the rest of us, including the majority of Americans who have no children in school, could be paying a heavy price for those votes.

* * * *

The President recently sent his so-called GI bill for children to Congress, and the actual bill is even more cynical than the original publicity made it look.

It proposes giving $1000 vouchers to 500,000 students. After the first year, money is supposed to be available to all students involved in choice programs whose family income is below the national median. Since there are about 22 million of these students, the program could end up costing $22 billion a year. Students would have to be taking part in a choice program to be eligible for a voucher, so we'd see all kinds of programs: choice within public school systems; choice between urban and suburban systems; choice programs that would include non-sectarian private schools only; and some that would include religious schools.

The bill raises two big questions. First, how can we afford a big, new education program when we are denying services to large numbers of children covered under existing federal education programs, like Chapter 1, Head Start and the education for handicapped children act, because we don't have enough money? How can we afford it when kids are going to schools so decrepit and filthy that we wouldn't want to keep animals in them? In *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol describes schools where the toilets overflow, stairwells become waterfalls when it rains and 1300 kids are crammed into a space for 900.

Second, how would the districts whose students were eligible for vouchers be chosen? Who would decide whether funds went to students in New York City or Dallas or Peoria?

The GI bill says that one man would be the czar—the Secretary of Education. He would be able to hand out the money wherever he chose and for whatever reasons. So the awards could be used to encourage districts where the choice plans looked promising. They could also be used to reward people whose views squared with the Secretary's or the President's or even as payoffs to cities and towns that voted for Mr. Bush. And given the fact that Mr. Bush and Secretary Alexander have gone all over the country championing private school vouchers, you don't have to be paranoid to assume that private school choice programs would get the lion's share of the taxpayer's money.

All this is why we seldom see a government program where a single individual has discretion over massive sums of money—why, in fact, the U.S. and every other country interested in good government eliminated such programs a hundred years ago. In the schools, we'd call it lack of accountability. In politics, they'd call it a mountain of pork.

Although the GI bill for children has been introduced in Congress, none of the Republican leaders is pushing it. And there are reasons. The money involved is foolish, given our budget deficits and our other commitments. As Mr. Bush himself used to say, we "can't afford to do that." Furthermore, not only the Democrats but also many Republicans are unwilling to support something so open to abuse.

But the President and the Secretary are not pushing for passage of the bill, either. And since they have not told us how they would pay for it—what taxes they would raise or what programs they would cut—it's reasonable to assume that Mr. Bush's GI bill for children is just another election-year gambit.

MR. SHANKER'S COMMENTS APPEAR IN THIS AD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS. READER CORRESPONDENCE IS INVITED. ADDRESS YOUR LETTERS TO MR. SHANKER AT THE AFT, 555 NEW JERSEY AVE., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20001. ©1992 BY ALBERT SHANKER.

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plete control, and this is finally what his re-entry into the race is about. Perhaps in his buzz-cut mind, it is an elaborate way to exploit the voter's short attention span. He can reintroduce himself, like a T.V. show that has been cancelled; the picture that had emerged could be forgotten and a new one brought into focus. But, in the interim, what we know about his character has emerged as something even more bizarre than what was known in July. His re-entry, if anything, confirms the earlier profile. There is less mystery than ever.

Many of the bizarre stories about his obsessive privacy and paranoia—hotly denied in his previous incarnation—have been amplified and confirmed in the interim. When it was first reported by TNR that he had unleashed investigators on his children, Perot charged that the story was a "fairy tale" made up by "some fruitcake." His "world-class children," he went on, "have grown up since they were small with a complicated security problem." Once, he admitted, he hired "local people" to help his son find a lost watch at college. Yet we now know that his fear of future stories about his strange relations with his children played some part in his exit from the race in July. Perot had caught wind that a number of news organizations were chasing leads about his investigation of one of his daughter's lovers. He mentioned his fear in passing to Ed Rollins, the operative he had hired to run his campaign but whose advice he wholly ignored. "It is a problem if you did it. Did you?" Rollins asked Perot. Perot gave no answer. "It's no fun anymore," the billionaire finally replied. The next day, he dropped out.

Since then aspects of Perot's investigation of an English professor at Vanderbilt who had an affair with Nancy Perot have dribbled out, lately in an article by Marie Brenner in *Vanity Fair*. Two reliable sources, who do not know each other but who each have had personal relationships with Perot, independently confirm the story and add crucial details, including details of Perot's deeper motives. In her senior year at Vanderbilt, Nancy Perot fell in love with a young assistant professor of English and wanted to marry him. Perot responded by hiring private investigators to discredit the professor. "By the time I finished, I knew more about him than he knew about himself," Perot boasted privately to one of the sources. Perot, say both sources, claimed (without offering proof) that the professor was a drug dealer, sought to marry his daughter only because he was after Perot's money, and had had many affairs. "He seduced all the female students by reciting Elizabethan poetry," Perot insisted—again presenting no proof. "Perot's interest in sex is high," said the source in whom Perot has confided. "He has a lot of theories about why men have affairs and who they sleep with." (Adultery, in Perot's firm, has been punished by termination.)

But there was another reason that Perot was determined to destroy the relationship. "You don't think that I'd let my daughter marry a Jew," he maintained time and again to a man he trusted. The source tells more: "The notion his daughter would marry a Jew drove him absolutely wild. He wasn't embarrassed talking about it. He'd say, 'You need to have your grandchildren look the way you do.'"

Perot's bigotry is part of his larger paranoia. Whenever he senses a challenge, real or imaginary, he seeks out an object for his contempt. Consider the Vietnam Memorial. The veterans who sponsored the design he despised were investigated and hounded by detectives secretly run out of the office of Roy Cohn; in private, meanwhile, Perot frequently denigrated the winner of the design competition, Maya Lin, as "Eggroll." "He hated that she was Asian," said a source to whom Perot mentioned his nickname for her several times.

The first phase of Perot's candidacy was forged at the point where his paranoia met his grandiosity. When he was offered Secret Service protection, he refused, bravely proclaiming at one campaign meeting that he didn't want "a 25-year-old to take a bullet for me." But Perot's longtime private security chief, Mark Blahnik, explained the true reasons to Charlie Leonard, the former director of the National Republican Congressional Campaign, who was serving as Rollins's deputy. "Mr. Perot knows who they really work for," Blahnik said, according to Leonard. "Who?" he asked. "They work for George Bush." "Well," said Leonard, "technically speaking. But I guess half are Democrats." Then Blahnik revealed to him the hidden lines of authority: "Our concern isn't even that they work for Bush. They also work for the CIA." "I found it laughable," said Leonard. (Blahnik has since surfaced as the national director of the Perot Petition Committee.) There was more humor in this vein. After a rally in Detroit, an aide set up a pro forma press availability on the airport tarmac—Perot's first and last. Perot reamed out the aide, according to Leonard, yelling: "Don't ever let the press near my plane again! They could see the tail number and terrorists could get hold of it. It's a security threat."

In returning to the race, Perot's motives are not to be located in the realm of pure reason. The deficit—his alleged cause—is obviously a ploy. If he'd wanted to make a principled, rather than a personally opportunistic, case, he could have joined forces with Warren Rudman and Paul Tsongas in their quixotic bipartisan crusade. But that would mean sharing the spotlight. His plan, moreover, is not anything he had any role in producing. The week before the Democratic convention, the staff he had hired to draw up his program presented to him a deficit proposal, which he had long promised the public. Almost as soon as the briefing began, according to reliable sources, Perot announced he had not read it. He was clearly bored. "I don't have time for this," he said. "You guys work it out." The meeting—the only substantive meeting of the entire Perot campaign—was abruptly concluded. Shortly afterward, the plan was repackaged as a book, *United We Stand*, by Ross Perot, which became his standard prop on television. The deficit gives Perot something to say so that he can be taken seriously as someone who has something to say.

In the meantime, his old obsessions still haunted him.

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On September 22, during the recess in the testimony of Henry Kissinger before the Senate Select Committee on POW and MIA Affairs, Perot called unexpectedly, demanding a closed meeting. The committee had revealed that a number of POWs were unaccounted for at the time that all prisoners were supposedly exchanged during the Nixon Administration. Now, according to a Senate source, Perot, who has made many unsupported claims about POWs over the years, flew to Washington to inform nine senators that he knew of thirty live prisoners, but gave no evidence. Did they, he asked, want him to bring one out, or a videotape? "Extraordinarily bonkers—out of comic books," said the Senate source. Perot received no answer from the stunned senators. Within hours he jetted back to Dallas to continue plotting his comeback.

Perot's strategy, during the first phase, was driven by his sense that he would win by acclamation. He assumed that the presidency would fall to him by an easy show of force: his mere appearance, highlighted by a few inspirational phrases ("Climb every mountain! Ford every stream!"), would resolve the contest in his favor. Now, during the second phase, his approach is to hold the balance of power and, by that, neutralize attacks on himself. He must, perforce, be the focus of radiant attention. All he has forgotten about is the press.

It was no wonder that Perot has basked again in his power, as those who had scorned him in the past came to pander. The Democrats hope Perot hates Bush so much he'll turn his wrath on him. The Republicans, more plausibly, believe that Perot will so fragment the opposition that Bush could win with a plurality, like John Major in Britain. They had no choice but to pay homage.

From Vernon Jordan and Admiral Crowe on one side to Jack Kemp and Mary Matalin on the other, the dignitaries arrived, like magi bearing gifts to the immaculate misconception. For a day, at least, Perot was back in his own special reality. Everyone played himself, but in the theater of the absurd. Senator Lloyd Bentsen was magnificent as the courtly statesman, while Phil Gramm, the junior senator from Texas, was fascinatingly repellent with his crude partisanship. But each was nonsensical. The truest figure seemed to be the wraith-like National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, who stood to the side of the stage, clutching a file folder to his chest as though it were a shield. His utterly inexpressive face exposed his feelings all too clearly: You may think that you are seeing me, but I am not here.

After hearing the delegation of Democrats, Perot declared: "There is a lot of commonality." After listening to the Republicans, he remarked: "There is a great deal of overlap." With the campaign momentarily transformed into an exercise of pleasing him, it was at last fun again. The tableau in Dallas was his vision thing, a living model of a Perot administration: the leaders of both political parties pay obeisance to him and humiliate themselves in public; the only people Perot says he has to consult are people he pays; and Larry King waits in the wings. •

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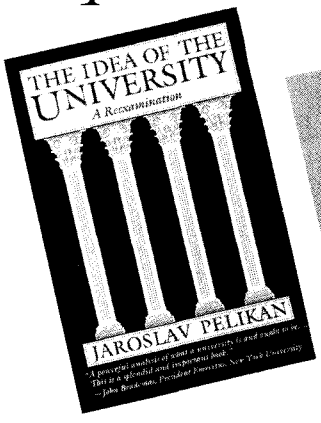

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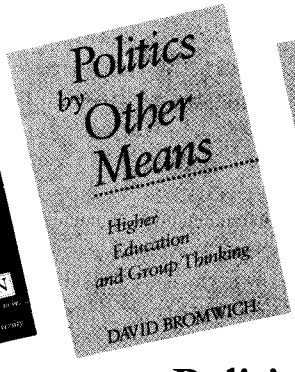

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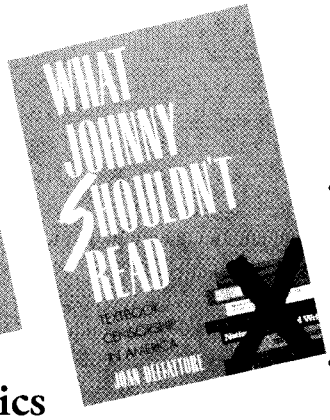

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The ANC stumbles.

MANDELA'S MESS

By Hermann Giliomee

1992 should have been the year in which the African National Congress came into its own. With President F. W. de Klerk's decision to break with apartheid, many observers confidently expected the ANC would rapidly negotiate a settlement. After all, its clear electoral majority would give it a dominant role in government. Drawing the obvious lesson from Eastern Europe, the ANC would then pursue market-oriented growth and responsible redistributionist policies to attract investment and assuage the fears of whites. With almost boundless international good will, the future looked bright.

None of this has happened. In May the ANC pulled out from the multiparty Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), which it had helped set up. In June it said it would embark on a program of mass action to force de Klerk to accept "ordinary democracy" rather than power-sharing, as the National Party insists. By mid-September, when the ANC said it was willing to resume talks, mass action had produced mixed results. The government did not concede "ordinary democracy" or a sovereign-elected constituent assembly; it ceded only three secondary demands: the release of scores of political prisoners, the fencing off of migrant worker hostels, and a ban on the carrying of dangerous cultural weapons in public areas. And these concessions carried a cost: Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, whose Zulu-based Inkatha movement is the ANC's greatest rival, broke off relations with de Klerk, further jeopardizing a peaceful democratic transition.

The mass action campaign was always a high-risk strategy. Demonstrations took place in August without serious incidents, but disaster struck on September 7, when 60,000 ANC supporters marched in Bisho, the "capital" of the minute Xhosa homeland of Ciskei, to topple the military leader Brigadier Oupa Gqozo. Ciskei security forces shot dead twenty-eight people and wounded 2,000. The ANC claimed that the shootings took place without provocation, but it soon came out that a section of the ANC march was intent on occupying Bisho and bringing down Gqozo, and that this strategy was clearly approved by Nelson Mandela. The liberal Democratic Party said the ANC was to blame, since it was clear the march would lead to violence.

For those sympathetic to the ANC it has become ever more difficult to understand its zigzags and infuriating inability to develop a coherent strategy to become the dominant party in government. Here is a movement, proclaiming itself ready to take over the industrial powerhouse of Africa, wasting its energy trying to topple Gqozo, a tinpot dictator in the backwaters of the country. The march on Bisho could serve no purpose in attaining negotiating goals, since CODESA had already agreed on reincorporating the homelands.

To understand ANC actions in the first thousand days since its unbanning, one must grasp three points: the conflicting agendas within the movement and among its allies, the ethnic forces that may be unleashed as South Africa gears up for an election, and the pivotal role of Nelson Mandela.

The ANC presents itself as heading an alliance comprised of itself, the South African Communist Party, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions. At least half of the ANC's national leadership are members of the SACP too. Communist leaders, many of them white or Indian, wield a distinctive influence. They tend to oppose any compromise that could leave white economic power intact. In their view it was not socialism that failed in Eastern Europe but state-directed socialism. For them it is South Africa's historic destiny to show that worker socialism can succeed. By this they mean worker control over factories and gradually replacing white managers with black workers. Over the long run it implies, in the words of leading ideologist Jeremy Cronin, addressing the question of abolishing capitalism.

Apart from clinging like a vice to the ANC, the SACP's strategy is to win control of the trade union movement. Because South Africa perversely granted full industrial rights to blacks before granting any political rights, and because of the white-black income gap, the country has perhaps the most militant trade union movement in the world. This black unionism was instrumental in significantly narrowing the racial wage gap in the 1980s. By the beginning of the decade, black skilled or semiskilled workers earned little more than half the wages of their white counterparts; this has risen to 70 percent. Black skilled or semiskilled wages are now double those in Taiwan, South Korea, and the Philippines, taking into account cost of living differences.

In the depressed economy, the black trade union movement is now bumping against a ceiling. Industrialists feel that raising black wages to assuage guilt or buy off militancy is counterproductive. The argument is increasingly made that in a country where there is 40 percent unemployment and where less than 10 percent of new job-seekers can find work, the emphasis must be on fuller employment rather than further raising wages without a commensurate increase in productivity.

The trade union movement is thus in a crisis. Wages are being eroded by 15 percent inflation, and the movement needs to satisfy other worker aspirations. In the past three decades African governments have emasculated trade unions, and COSATU is determined to prevent this in South Africa. A poll of COSATU shop stewards found that in the first election twice as many would vote for COSATU or the SACP as for the ANC. Their goals are

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those of worker socialism: 75 percent want factories to be run by worker committees, and 67 percent see nationalization as the solution.

Although Mandela has declared that private-sector growth is the only road to economic recovery, he cannot alienate COSATU. The ANC depends on COSATU's formidable muscle to stage its mass actions and to get the workers out to the polls in future elections. The COSATU leadership is happy to comply as long as it is kept in the inner circles of power. It is generally believed that in May and June this year Mandela was persuaded by SACP and trade union leaders to embark on mass mobilization rather than accept a compromise solution.

Second, the ANC's mass campaign must be seen as part of the run-up to the first post-apartheid election. After a visit to South Africa in the early 1980s, Samuel Huntington observed that the state's stability rested on three pillars: its coercive powers, the cohesion of the white ruling group, and ethnic divisions in black ranks. Right now the second of the three is the most important. Comparative studies of democratic transitions show that the democratic opposition normally fails to attain its goals unless strategic sections of the ruling group defect to it. In the two or three years before its unbanning, the ANC spent much time with delegations of white South Africans trying to persuade them of its pragmatism. But the early promise of white support for the ANC has evaporated. Two recent independent surveys found that only 1 percent to 2 percent of whites will vote for the ANC. Potential white support has been alienated by the ANC's mass actions, continuing flirtation with nationalization, and attacks on national symbols as relics of apartheid, even though a symbol such as the national flag is more than 60 years old.

But the ANC's most critical dilemma is overcoming the black ethnic divisions and other forms of intrablack rivalry. On the face of it the ANC does not have much to worry about. Neither Inkatha nor the radical Pan Africanist Congress enjoys more than 10 percent in polls against 70 percent for the ANC. Yet the ethnic issue may turn out to be explosive. Duke University's Donald Horowitz argues that supraethnic black solidarity is a function of a common resistance to oppression. He warns that intra-African differences "are very much on the order of the cleavages that in some countries translated into serious post-independence conflict."

The main rivalry will almost certainly be between the Xhosa and the Zulu group, forming approximately 23 and 27 percent of the African population respectively. Although Xhosa, along with whites and Indians, are greatly overrepresented in the ANC leadership ranks, there is only one Zulu, the respected Jacob Zuma. At present the Zulu in the Natal province are split almost right down the middle between support for the ANC and support for the Inkatha.

Initially, members of the smaller ethnic groups flocked to the ANC as the standard-bearer of the African struggle. Many non-Xhosa now appear to be taking a waiting posi-

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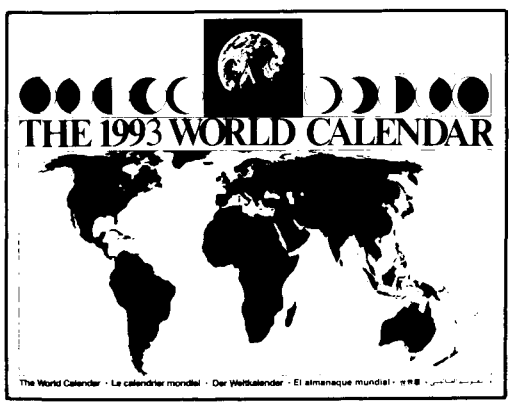

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tion. Polls show that a great majority of Africans prefer a system of ethnic power-sharing to black majority rule. The ANC, by contrast, is committed to majority rule, and there are suspicions, undoubtedly fed by elements in the security forces, that the ANC will use majority rule to establish Xhosa rule over the country. It is significant that support for majority rule is much weaker among non-Xhosa groups than among the Xhosa.

These tendencies may well be intensified in the post-apartheid period. At CODESA all the parties have already agreed that half of the representatives will be elected on regional lists. With the exception of the Witwatersrand region, all the regions are characterized by concentrations of particular ethnic groups. It takes no powerful imagination to anticipate that the regional representatives will come to represent ethnic as well as regional interests, and that an ANC-controlled government will be under intense scrutiny for signs of ethnic favoritism in its appointments and distribution of largesse to the regions.

Although the ANC strongly supports individual rights, it has consistently opposed minority rights, which it sees as a cloak for the continuation of white divide-and-rule politics. In its place it proposes nation-building along Jacobin lines. In exile one of its main constitutional and human rights advisers and executive member of the SACP, Albie Sachs, coined the slogan, "For the Nation to Live the Tribe Must Die." Using the Mozambican experience as a model, he argued that "people's power is unitary, not pluralistic." It is not shared along tribal, regional, or racial lines, nor is it a balance worked out among different racial or ethnic groups. It is in fact the "organized form of the rule of the masses which overrides all ethnic divisions."

In the latter half of the 1980s the ANC's Soviet backers increasingly became worried about these Jacobin tendencies. In a seminar of ANC and Soviet social scientists held in Moscow in early 1989, the latter warned that it was no longer sufficient for the ANC to write off ethnic clashes between blacks in the mines or conflicts with Inkatha as "intrigues of apartheid." For them the examples of the USSR, Yugoslavia, and India showed both "the need and inevitability" of giving political autonomy and guarantees to national minorities.

The Jacobins in the ANC have tempered their rhetoric over the past year or two, and Mandela has shown that he is not insensitive to ethnic fears. While rejecting group or minority rights as a "formula for disaster," he has conceded that "every national group would like to see that people of their flesh and blood are in government." But it is far from clear whether as a majority party the ANC would want to appoint representatives from the various ethnic groups to the ruling coalition, or whether these groups could insist on their own representatives. As a typical vanguard party during its years in exile, the ANC still has the dream of engineering a nonethnic society through an ostensibly nonethnic ruling party.

Finally, there is Nelson Mandela. Whatever his failings, Mandela is one of the truly historic figures of the 20th century, symbolizing, along with Martin Luther King Jr., the black struggle for dignity and recognition. But Mandela is also a historic figure for another reason. As Marina Ottaway argues in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Mandela and the ANC are the last in a long line of African leaders and organizations that have fought against European colonialism. Mandela personifies the struggle of an "oppressed African nation" to decolonize itself. Mandela finds it inconceivable that any African could be excluded from the ANC or that ethnic divisions could thwart the expression of the will of the people. As Ottaway argues, in the 1960s these convictions unfailingly led to the one-party state and the suppression of rival organizations. Where competing organizations survived, as they did in Angola, the result has not been democracy but civil war. Conducting a successful liberation struggle is quite a different matter from laying the foundations for a democratic system, an efficient bureaucracy, and a viable economy.

Mandela's leadership is the unifying force in the ANC. He straddles the divide between nationalists and socialists, between pragmatists and radicals, between nonradicalists and Africanists. He also straddles the division among strategies: between mass mobilization and negotiation, between confrontation and reconciliation. He is indispensable for a settlement. Without him as the leader of the ANC's non-Communists, the government would have found it difficult to start negotiations with the ANC. Without Mandela, the hero of the struggle, the ANC will find it extremely tough to sell to its radical followers the compromises it will undoubtedly have to make at the negotiating table.

Thus Mandela will ultimately decide which course the ANC takes at any particular moment. The ANC's national executive is deadlocked between adherents of conflicting strategies. Using a chairman-of-the-board style, Mandela tries to rally consensus before he moves forward. Only when the situation becomes critical, as he judged it to be in the aftermath of the Bisho shootings, does he take sides with one faction. If the ANC were to lose Mandela, it would almost certainly trigger a leadership struggle and schisms within the ANC that could jeopardize any settlement that had been reached.

When negotiations resume, the ANC faces a conundrum. It has pictured itself as being in the same mold as the liberation organizations in Zimbabwe and Namibia, which swept to victory in what could be called liberation elections. This belief tends to be confirmed by opinion polls showing that the ANC may win close to 60 percent support in a first election. But opinion polls are not elections, as leaders as diverse as Pinochet and Kinnock discovered. If the constitution is a compromise between the incumbents and the ANC, it is far more likely that the election could resemble the first semifree election in Poland, where the turnout was barely 50 percent. If the election registers a low turnout (less than 50 percent), the ANC could be in trouble. Inkatha and the ruling National Party may even achieve the unthinkable: defeat of the ANC.

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For the ANC, then, the trick is to create a bandwagon effect that would sweep it to victory. It must, in other words, win before the first election takes place. This can only happen if mass mobilization succeeds in energizing the masses along the lines Albie Sachs suggested, by establishing the ANC as the sole legitimate representative of the African nation. That was what it was trying to do at Bisho. But President de Klerk is determined to upset the bandwagon. He has allowed the mass mobilization to continue, in the belief that the radicals in the ANC would overplay their hand, producing a split in the ANC and increasing resentment or apathy among the African masses who have come to despair that their lives will ever return to normality.

A split in the ANC is unlikely to happen before the election, but the ANC conundrum is still there. The question is this: Does it become a regular political party representing interests rather than symbolic values and work with other parties to rebuild the economy and regenerate society? This means postponing the dream of liberation and working with other parties in a broad-based coalition. The alternative is for the ANC to increase the steam in the South African pressure cooker until it wins a victory that will give it a free hand to dispose of what is left of a functioning economy. But by that time, it may not be all that much.

HERMANN GILIOMEE teaches politics at the University of Cape Town and is currently a research fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Gore in private.

THE OTHER AL

By Martin Peretz

I've known Al Gore for twenty-seven years, ever since, as a freshman, he was a member of a seminar I taught at Harvard. Soon he and my wife became friends, and soon after Al brought Tipper around. Since then, we have shared some memorable times: we watched together as Neil Armstrong landed on the moon; we saw our kids grow up; we celebrated each other's fests; we stayed close. I say this merely to disclose my interest. You can discount, if you wish, my enthusiasm for Gore's candidacy as an expression simply of loyalty, the sentiment of someone who is at once his old friend and a fan.

This is certainly how many people accounted for my support—and that of TNR—for the Gore candidacy in 1988. Of course, that was the year the Democratic wisdom favored Michael Dukakis. Whether chastened or merely hungry for a Democratic restoration, these folk now tell you they've been for Gore all along, and they whisper the wish, which he has never permitted himself (a true index of the kind of humility that is not at odds with pride), that the order of the ticket has been reversed. But then, even in Hollywood, many who were once churlish about Tipper now see some sense in her earlier preoccupations.

Still, this is not Al Gore's campaign, but Bill Clinton's, and it is he who has amassed the ten-plus point lead in the polls. But one reason he has been able to do this is that, as Rick Hertzberg argued in these pages, in choosing Gore as running mate he enhanced the ticket rather than simply balancing it. The choice was both unconventional and brave: unconventional because balance would have dictated that a moderate in the top spot award the second spot to a certified paleoliberal (and someone from a different region besides); brave because Gore is very much a man of parts, not someone who will meld easily into the scenery. But I think Clinton must have recognized what I have long felt to be true, and this is that personal ambition is less important to Gore than common purpose. In any case, Gore will not be the kind of vice president who, out of hubris or resentment, will try to pursue his own agenda the way John Nance Garner and Henry Wallace did under FDR or Lyndon Johnson did under John F. Kennedy. And he will not whine for four years the way Hubert Humphrey did under LBJ.

From the beginning Clinton has had reason to be pleased with his designation of Gore, even if its electoral consequences have been exaggerated. Here's how, in an unpublished essay, Norman Mailer captured the moments after Gore's speech to the Madison Square Garden convention: "He had concluded. They cheered him as if he were the president. ... If there had been a computer plugged in to every political vote in America, you might have heard the count switching over from Bush. ... Lord, went the prevailing sentiment, talent is not dead in the land." Mailer goes on to say that Gore had been "a surprise on this night," although he was "still reserved, and with a hint of inner loneliness." This rings true to me about Gore. Better an awareness of solitude in our public officials with its implicit admission of moods and doubts, I say, than the relentless conviviality of the empty heads. I was on the convention floor as Gore gave his speech, and nothing about it—neither the message nor the delivery—surprised me. Others who heard it, in person or on television, were surprised by the energy and joyfulness of the speech, perhaps because Gore had been dubbed "stiff" in 1988. But stiff in contrast to whom? Dukakis? In any case Gore is not stiff. Although he is sometimes formal and always respectful (when my wife first met him in the mid-'60s he called her "ma'am"), he is actually easy with people, especially with young people. And he is given to pranks, but never mean ones. Those of us who know him have come to expect from him both gravitas and wit, and that's exactly what we got in New York, and that's what we got years ago in Cambridge.

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What so stirred Mailer about Gore's speech was less the politics than the metaphors, two in particular, and their meanings. Here is the first, as Gore put it: "Just as the false assumption that we are not connected to the earth has led to the ecological crisis, so the equally false assumption that we are not connected to each other has led to our social crisis. Even worse, the evil and mistaken assumption that we have no connection to those generations preceding us or those who will follow us has led to the crisis of values we face today." The connections Gore made were not obvious but they were compelling, and it is a mark of true leaders that they do not shy away from complicated and fresh associations.

Gore's second metaphor was both more celebrated and more derided, at least among those made nervous by personal emotions publicly expressed. It concerned the near-death of his son: "I ran to his side and held him and called his name, but he was limp and still, with-

Green giant

Looking at Al Gore's legislative record, one would hardly judge him an "environmental extremist," the label the White House has tried to pin on him. Though he has been a vocal and effective critic of the Bush Administration's environmental failures, and though greens support him enthusiastically, his ecological voting record puts him well into the middle of the pack of Democratic senators. Indeed, Gore's lifetime grade from the League of Conservation Voters, a consortium of mainstream environmental groups, is a middling seventy-seven out of a possible 100. Early in his congressional career, in fact, Gore failed one of the environmentalists' litmus test issues of the late '70s by voting against protecting the endangered snail darter in favor of constructing the Tellico dam in his home state of Tennessee.

Critics in the Bush Administration want it both ways. While branding Gore an extremist, they accuse him of not being an effective legislator on the issues. "Quite frankly, there is not much there," said Michael Deland, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "There has been a lot of rhetoric but not much in the way of performance." Administration officials point out that Gore was not a major player on many of the most important environmental bills taken up by recent Congresses. These include the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990, the 1990 farm bill, the national energy strategy, the highway bill, the elevation of the EPA to cabinet level, the oil pollution act, nuclear liability legislation, and others. Indeed, even some environmental lobbyists say Gore has been less influential than he could be because he does not serve on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee or any other key committee concerned with environmental matters.

In fact, Gore's record is substantial. He was the author of several major amendments of the 1990 Clean Air Act re-authorization, including requiring the phaseout of ozone-depleting hydrochlorofluorocarbons. His proposal for a "strategic environmental research and development program" to bring the research resources of the Defense Department to bear on global environmental problems was adopted in 1990. He was the author of a resolution calling for the protection of Antarctica from mining and other development. He was also a leader of the successful effort to bar oil development from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He has been particularly active in promoting environmentally sound technology to help restore the nation's competitiveness in international markets, successfully pushing, for example, for the creation of a new national network of high-speed information "superhighways" that would link powerful computers with schools and research centers. Since his vote on the snail darter, Gore "has worked strongly for the protection for species and habitat," according to the League of Conservation Voters. And as a member of the House in the late '70s, Gore presided over a landmark investigation that disclosed the magnitude of the nation's hazardous waste problem. Shortly thereafter, he co-sponsored the Superfund bill to clean up toxic waste sites.

Gore is not a member of "The Club," the coterie of influential senators who cut deals over legislation. But despite his lack of insider status, he is without question the most prominent environmental activist in the United States Congress. His leadership stems from his demonstrated ability to recognize, master, and articulate emerging issues. He has been well ahead of the curve on issues from hazardous waste in the '70s to global warming, destruction of the earth's protective ozone layer, and the disappearance of species in the '80s and '90s. *Earth in the Balance*, Gore's best-selling book on the global environment, is a meticulously researched, careful analysis of some of the most important geopolitical issues of our time. What is more, the book offers a long-range strategy for asserting American leadership in a new system of collective security built around the "central organizing principle" of environmentally sustainable economic development.

The Bush-Quayle campaign has used the book as exhibit A for its charges that Gore is an extremist. Quayle has called it the Democratic "manifesto" and said that following its recommendations would require sharp increases in taxes and lose thousands of jobs. The Republicans are particularly shrill about Gore's suggestions on the use of carbon taxes to encourage the reduced consumption of fossil fuels, hoping once again to stimulate a knee-jerk reaction to the word "tax." The Clinton campaign has handled the book rather gingerly, particularly the carbon tax idea, which it has described as only a suggestion for study. In fact, Gore's own words unmistakably show that he thinks it would be a good idea. But he also states unequivocally that he is not advocating a tax increase. Under the plan, other taxes would be lowered commensurately. As for the idea of building a new system of collective security around sustainable development, it was embraced by almost all governments at the Earth Summit in Rio. If Gore is an extremist for proposing it, so are the leaders of Germany, Japan, and other industrialized democracies.

The good news for Gore is that the extremist tag does not appear to be sticking, even within the Administration. Gore "cares a lot and knows a lot about the issues," EPA administrator William K. Reilly said in a recent television interview, adding, "I don't think he's an environmental extremist." Of course, within the administration, Reilly's a bit of a fringe figure himself.

PHILIP SHABECOFF

Philip Shabecoff's book on the environmental movement, *A Fierce Green Fire*, will be published in January by Hill & Wang.

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Is it True What They Say About Catholics?

No. But as Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger Sr. observed, prejudice against the Catholic Church is "the deepest bias in the history of the American people."

For example, among fundamentalists there's that whopper of a myth that the Pope is the Anti-Christ, the Catholic Church is the Whore of Babylon, and Catholics aren't really Christians. Among the politically correct there's the sneering calumny that Catholicism is anti-woman, sexually fascist, and basically for cave-dwelling ignoramuses.

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out breath or pulse...." Gore managed to tell this story with a skill only found, in Mailer's view, in "the greatest actors and the most sincere humans." I do not grasp exactly what made some feel uncomfortable when Gore extended the metaphor and spoke of also seeing our democracy "lying in the gutter, waiting for us to give it a second breath of life." There was nothing contrived in the link in his mind. Treasures were at risk. Urgent personal experience should help us see the urgency of our common lives, and it has helped Al Gore to see it.

It is true that Gore is as much a product of St. Albans in Washington as of Carthage. This is to say that he is part of the elite and comfortable in it. But he does not share its cynicisms, and he is genuinely stirred by realities that others would patronize as merely heartwarming or heartbreaking. Then, too, he is a religious man, and nothing makes the elite feel more queasy than someone of faith. I myself have felt the condescension of peers toward my own struggle with unbelief; and though we have only talked about this inferentially, I'm sure he has also sensed the disdain of the fanatically secular.

It seems to me that Gore does believe that in the life of nations and civilizations there is, in the words of a Protestant hymn, "a moment to decide." If the moment passes and decisions are not made, nations and civilizations march aimlessly to a point of no return. History is strewn with many such instances. Gore is convinced that we are at such a moment in our callous relationship to the environment. But he also knows that ours has been an era of intellectual discontinuities of the sort that present enormous opportunities, not least in the ecological sphere. But not alone in that sphere. The true new paradigm is not in politics, after all, but in the life sciences, in physics, and in the technologies of knowledge itself. The question is whether we as an educated polity will be able to imagine the picture. Gore has already begun to describe it.

Vast social and economic stakes depend on our capacity to reorganize the country and its schools around what science makes possible and on what it makes inevitable. Gore is uniquely qualified, intellectually and temperamentally, to be the political catalyst for the nettlesome technical and moral discussions that need to take place before, otherwise, a new scientific history grabs us by the throat. The scientific journal *Nature* has testified editorially to Gore's grasp of such issues as global warming, genetic engineering, and high-speed computer networks. The *Times Literary Supplement* has remarked that "there is hardly a leading politician in Britain who could write a book of similar authority on this subject."

Gore has always been intellectually curious. He rightly has confidence in his own mental velocity and depth. The same discipline that gave him mastery over the arcana of advanced weapons also gave him a grasp of the irritating contradictions of Middle Eastern politics. My wife, who runs The Family Center in Somerville, Massachusetts, tells me that he assimilated, over a remarkably short period of time, the theory and practice of family systems, and ran a conference in Tennessee on dysfunctional families that was at once very professional and accessible to the uninitiated. If cynics think this is touchy-feely ,so be it. The idea of family to Gore is not simply an incantation or a reproach. It is a delicate personal and social mechanism under siege by many aspects of modern life. For some families the adversary is actually affluence; for others it is anxiety; for still others it is poverty and crime and wanton life habits. Gore understands just how difficult it will be to design public policies to bolster the fragile family, and how necessary it is to do just that.

I've been traveling off and on with the Gore end of the campaign recently. It is a draining experience, even if you are not the one on stage. One day last week Al gave six speeches in nine hours. During "down time" he told me he had just "pulled two all-nighters" to finish a 3,500-word introduction to a paperback edition of his book. This was not just bravado. When you read or hear Gore's words they are really his own. Frankly, he does not take editorial advice gracefully, either from his former teacher or his sometime editor, who in this case happen to be the same person. Last week, at an aeronautics factory in Tom Downey's congressional district on Long Island, I heard him speak to several hundred workers for twenty minutes. The first few of these he read from a text on defense conversion. The rest was extemp. This was delivered in flawless English, fluid and fluent. It's a sign of how degraded our discourse is that I take special note of this. But we do live with a president unable to put noun and verb together. Bush, in this regard, represents quite accurately the general sloppiness of thought and word in our culture. In that sense, Gore and the man who chose him are rather old-fashioned in their demands on themselves. They want to say what they mean, and they want what they mean to have meaning. •

Al Gore's campaign makeover.

WHAT IT TAKES

By Fred Barnes

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Senator Al Gore describes his best-selling book (No. 5 on *The New York Times*'s non-fiction list) on the environment, *Earth in the Balance*, as a true cri de coeur. "A book gives you a chance to really tell people who you are," he says. Having read the book, I've concluded that the real Gore is an extraordinarily passionate environmentalist who believes the earth and humankind face a peril at least as threatening as Hitler's fascism, Stalin's commu-

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nism, or full-scale nuclear war. Gore is so inflamed with the urgency of his save-the-environment-now message that he can barely contain himself.

But, as Bill Clinton's vice presidential running mate, he's managed to do so. That's fortunate for him, Clinton, and Democratic prospects for winning the White House for the first time in sixteen years. As environmental evangelist, Gore may thrill the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth, but he won't win many elections. He's bold in the extreme, politically indiscreet, and inclined to be a scold, intolerant of critics, opponents, even himself at times. But candidate Gore is dramatically different, a kind of conventional, unreflective twin brother of the intense, "real" Gore. He's cautious and unswervingly mainstream. Gone are the apocalyptic musings and calls for radical overhaul not just of the American economy but of all civilization. Now he's upbeat and an advocate of mild change. And though he may be suppressing a lot, this Gore is an extremely effective candidate.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Gore's split personality isn't unique. This may be hard to swallow, but he reminds me of George Bush—not this year's indignant incumbent but the more appealing Bush of the 1988 presidential race. After two decades in Washington, Bush had high-toned ideas about governing and about America's role in the world. But you scarcely heard a word about them as he skewered Michael Dukakis. His campaign was animated by Willie Horton and the Pledge of Allegiance. Bush consciously lowered himself a few intellectual notches to be effective in the dirty business of electoral politics. I think Gore is doing the same thing. It doesn't mean he's a total phony or fraud. He probably believes every word he says on the stump. He's just not expressing what really matters to him.

Gore previewed his campaign style at the Democratic National Convention in July. Actually, his convention address was a bit more substantial than his standard stump speech, but it did include the line that's become his signature: "It's time for them to go." At the convention, the crowd eagerly joined in chanting the line. Gore was a smashing success, all but overshadowing Clinton, whose acceptance speech was less energetic.

Gore injects the "time to go" refrain in every speech. In Savannah on September 22, he asked a downtown crowd, "Do you want four more years of trickle-down economics?" The answer was no. "Do you want four more years of read my lips?" No. "Four more years of a phony education president?" No. "Four more years of Dan Quayle?" No. "Four more years of George Bush?" No. "Do you think it's time for them to go?" The crowd said yes. "Then what time is it?" By then, the crowd was fully engaged, chanting back at Gore, "It's time for them to go." He shouted the question twice more. Same response. This is low-octane rhetoric, but Gore makes it work. As best I can tell, he enjoys the rapport it gives with crowds.

Gore has also become the chief sloganeer of the Clinton campaign. He never tosses off a complex thought when a slogan or dumb joke will do. The Republican chant of "four more years," he says in every speech, "sounds more like a threat than a promise." If Bush made a movie, Gore says, he'd have to call it "Honey, I Shrunk the Economy." The sequel: "Honey, I Blew Up the Deficit."

His best flourish was swiped from Jesse Jackson, the Clinton-Gore nemesis. The Savannah version began, "The deficit is up, private jobs are down. Unemployment is up, personal income is down. Bankruptcies are up, housing starts are down. The trade deficit is up, business confidence is down." Gore wound up by saying, "Everything that ought to be down is up. Everything that ought to be up is down. They've got it upside down. And we're going to turn it right-side up." O.K., this may not seem compelling when written down. You had to be there and hear it. Believe me, it rouses crowds.

For disciplined adherence to the campaign script, Gore sets a new standard for candidates. No matter where he is or what he's asked, he sticks to a few campaign themes, the chief of which is that the Bush presi-

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dency has produced the "worst economic performance since the Great Depression." In the four days I traveled with Gore, he said this so often I began jotting down "wepstgd" to save time. "Sticking to message," as Gore calls it, shouldn't be sneered at. Many politicians falter on this, including Gore in his presidential bid in 1988. He says he had a message (I don't recall one in particular), but "I didn't communicate the one I have very well." He learned his lesson. He may go days now without saying anything intellectually penetrating, but he doesn't make any mistakes either. If Jack Kemp were as disciplined as Gore is today, he might be president now, running for re-election after having whipped Bush, then Dukakis, in 1988.

Gore is shameless in exploiting every question from the press or public to launch an attack on Bush's economic record or a defense of Clintonomics. At a breakfast in Washington with three dozen reporters on September 22, with no prompting, he asked if he'd told everyone of Clinton's amazing record of creating jobs in Arkansas. Later that day in Savannah, he used a "press availability" to hammer Bush. Gore was asked three questions about presidential debates, one about polls, and none about the economy. Nevertheless, he insisted the reason Bush refuses to debate is "self-evident. After compiling the worst economic record since the Great Depression, he doesn't want to answer questions about that policy." Three answers later, he declared, "Bush is afraid to answer questions about the worst economic performance since the Great Depression." Wepstgd.

What's striking about the rigidly scripted Gore is the sharp contrast with Gore the author and crusading ecologist. His book isn't the grab bag of platitudes and policy proposals that presidential wannabes usually produce. *Earth in the Balance* is dense with research and brimming with scenarios of ecological catastrophe. I think Gore wildly exaggerates the threat to the environment, especially from global warming. But he deserves credit for writing (no, it wasn't ghostwritten) a breathtakingly serious manifesto. He worked on it from 1989 to 1991—at a time when he wasn't thinking about running for president in 1992. And it shows. The book attacks Plato, the Enlightenment, rationality, the scientific revolution, the industrial revolution, the automobile, our "dysfunctional civilization," biotechnology, free market economics, "the dominant male perspective," population growth—not the normal political targets. There's plenty of psychobabble too ("We don't really live in our lives").

The book puts Gore far ahead of the curve (just ahead is where clever politicians like to be), but maybe he couldn't help himself. "I had an epiphany of sorts following my son's near fatal accident" in 1989, he told me. "It changed my priority to focus a lot more intensely on those things I felt were most important." Gore set up shop in the Capitol Hill apartment of his parents and ignored all but essential Senate business and his 1990 re-election as senator from Tennessee as he put the book together. He made no effort to make the book moderate or mainstream. Now, in the unexpected role of vice presidential candidate, he's been forced to fudge on what he wrote.

Take the budget deficit. It's an example of "astonishing irresponsibility" that's "endangering the future of our children, yet nobody is doing anything about it," he wrote. Certainly Clinton and Gore aren't. They make only fleeting references to it. I cited this passage to Gore and asked how he squares the fervor of the book with his current posture of largely ignoring the deficit. "Well, that's a fair question," he said. He paused, then argued that economic growth must come first or deficit reduction will never be achieved. True, but that's the supply-side position, not what he wrote in his book. He added that the Clinton-Gore program may toughen its approach to the deficit. "We haven't said our final word on the subject," Gore said.

He also waffled on the book's call for eliminating the internal combustion engine within twenty-five years. Asked on August 30 on "This Week with David Brinkley" if this would be a goal of a Clinton-Gore administration, Gore backtracked: "I used that as an example of the scale of changes which we ought to contemplate over the next quarter-century." And asked if rescuing the environment would be "the central organizing principle" of a Clinton-Gore administration, he filibustered without saying yes or no.

For all the ripe targets in the book, Gore has had an easy time in the campaign. Reporters are intimidated by his seriousness. They don't dwell on, or even notice, the sorts of small errors they'd spotlight if Quayle or Reagan made them. For instance, *Earth in the Balance* cites an environmental quotation attributed to Chief Seattle in 1855. It turns out, however, that the words came from a Texas screenwriter named Ted Perry in 1971. National Public Radio pointed this out in 1991, but the quote wound up in Gore's book anyway. No one in the press gigged him. Nor has the Bush campaign put much pressure on Gore. Quayle aide Richard Porter read Gore's book last summer while recuperating from a water skiing accident, but he couldn't persuade his superiors to go after Gore aggressively as an environmental extremist. The best he could muster was a critical reference to Gore by President Bush on August 25 and a speech by Quayle three days later. Bush said Clinton "talks about" Gore's book, and noted Gore's attack on the auto industry and the internal combustion engine. "What kind of people are we dealing with here?" Bush asked jokingly. Quayle was rougher. He said Gore's environmental views are "detached from reality and devoid of common sense." Gore, he said, has a "hysterical vision of the world." Bush and Quayle didn't follow up, the press wasn't interested, and Gore remains unscratched.

A free ride like this sometimes leads a candidate to loosen up and speak his mind boldly. Gore appeared to be on the verge of that at the breakfast with reporters. He indicated he was ready to spell out his and Clinton's position on the free trade agreement with Mexico. Heads perked up, including mine. I should have known better. Only kidding, Gore said. •

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THE BOY IN THE BUBBLE

By Michael Lewis

The next real opportunity for the American people to get a good glimpse of me will be the 1992 campaign.—Dan Quayle

Tuesday, September 22, 1992. Air Force Two.

"This is the vice president."

I look up from my seat at the back of the plane with the eleven other journalists, thinking that Dan Quayle has come back to see us, but he is nowhere. The flight attendant who has spoken is holding up a chocolate doughnut and mysteriously saying, "This is the vice president." The chocolate top has nicely melted, but it is an otherwise unexceptional doughnut. There appears to be some question as to whether the sides are completely warm. The plate is surrounded by a staff of four, each in turn touching the sides of the doughnut. "Seems O.K. to me," says one flight attendant.

"It's a little cool underneath," says another.

"Hit it with another fifteen seconds," says the head steward, and back into the microwave it goes before being borne to the vice president at the front of the plane.

Before we have a chance to ask if the Quayle doughnut is daily ritual, the vice president himself appears. He makes a warm first impression. Despite his troubles, he has the ease and small talk of someone who expects people to like him, and people do.

"Do you think the Terminator is a good role model?" someone asks, hoping to move the news forward from Murphy Brown.

"Put me down as less violence," says the vice president.

Tuesday. 9:25 a.m. Houston.

It's the same every time; nothing really changes. Air Force Two comes to rest on the tarmac of a military base on the outskirts of a medium-sized city. The tail of the plane extrudes journalists and Secret Service men, who race to join the camera crews from the local news stations setting up down below. A few minutes later, Dan Quayle appears in the open door at the front and waves. I had always thought when I saw him on television waving from his plane that there must be someone down below waving back. Not so. Our vice president stands there waving to . . . nobody. Waving, in fact, to a field in the middle distance over the heads of the cameramen, so that the people back home in their living rooms will remain comfortably deceived.

With the assurance of someone who has practiced this a thousand times in a bathroom mirror, Quayle hops down four stairs, selects a notional target from the people milling on the ground, makes a six-shooter from his thumb and index finger, and fires. This is meant to convey the idea of a dynamic young leader bonding with a prized supporter. And it does, unless you see him do it five times in two days, often as not to the backside of a member of the Secret Service. The ritual ends as Quayle runs down the rest of the stairs with his feet splayed out wide like a yellow labrador sliding down a ski slope, and hops into the back of his black limousine with its bullet-proof windows and reinforced steel.

Except at the bottom of the stairs this morning there actually is a crowd. Maybe because Houston is the first stop on a two-day swing through Texas, Oklahoma, and Arizona, the vice president's advance team has found a high school band to play the same song a half-dozen times, while a couple of hundred other schoolchildren wave American flags, which they chuck onto the ground at the end of the rally. The receiving line consists of local right-wing dignitaries, two black Points of Light, and Kimberly Davidson, the daughter of a Texas state trooper recently shot dead by a young black man.

She's the main prop. The man who killed her father was found to have a cop killer rap song in his car. After a victory lap around the crowd, Quayle steers her back onto the plane. He emerges with her ten minutes later, a look of righteous indignation on his face. "I've just been with Kimberly Davidson," the vice president begins with the assumed gravity of a newscaster. "And you should have seen the sadness on her face. . . ."

As he pulls a long face and calls for the withdrawal of the evil rap song from the market, Kimberly stands off to the side giggling with another woman. He's talking about her father's murder and she's talking about the thrill of meeting the vice president. Not that it matters. What's off to the side, what's left behind—these things are not reported. What is reported is what is happening in the tiny bubble around Quayle, the only place the journalists have time to watch.

Tuesday. 10:10 a.m. Texas Children's Hospital.

Quayle does a quick tour, stopping to chat with sick children. He finishes in the exercise room. Judging from

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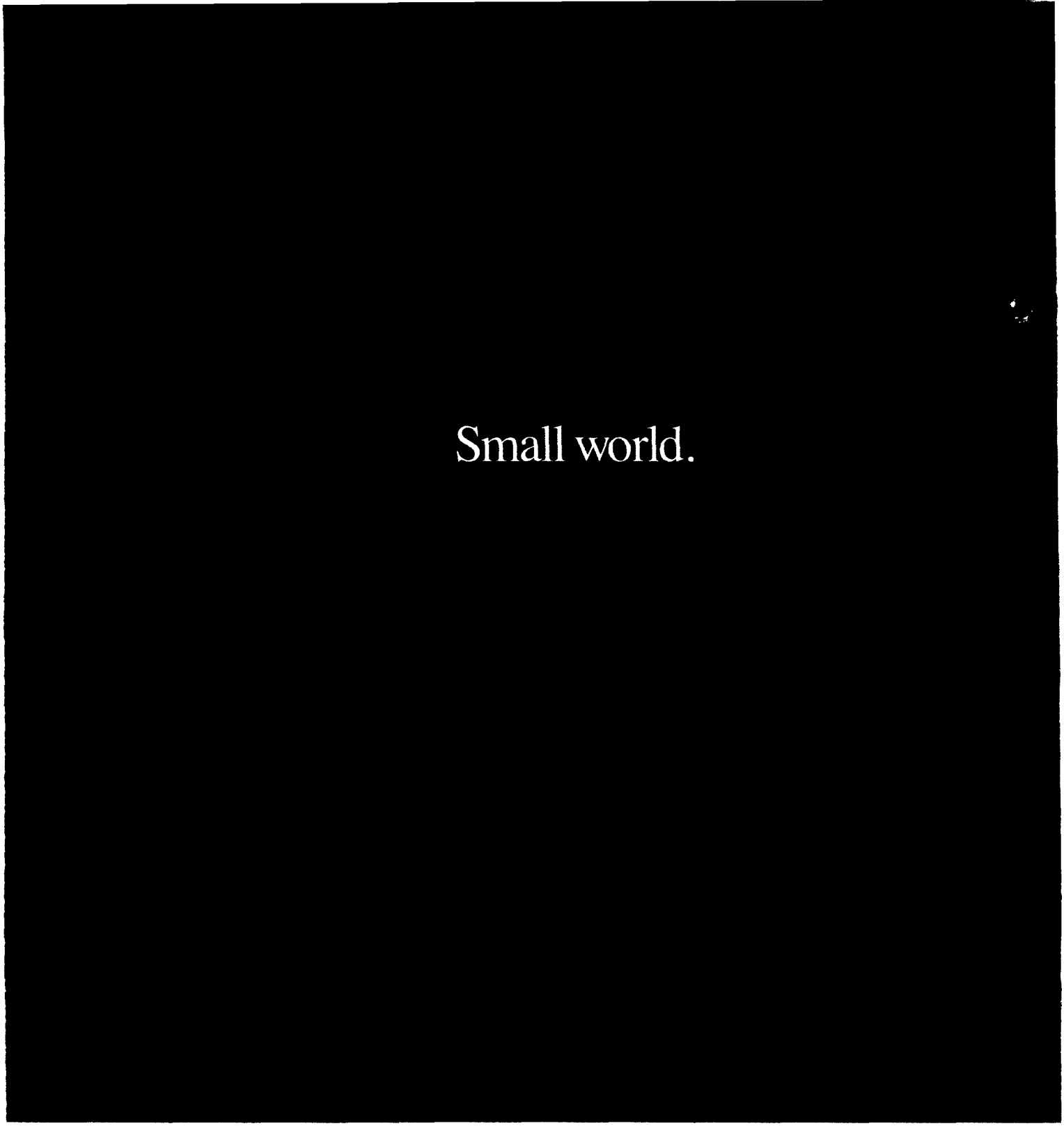

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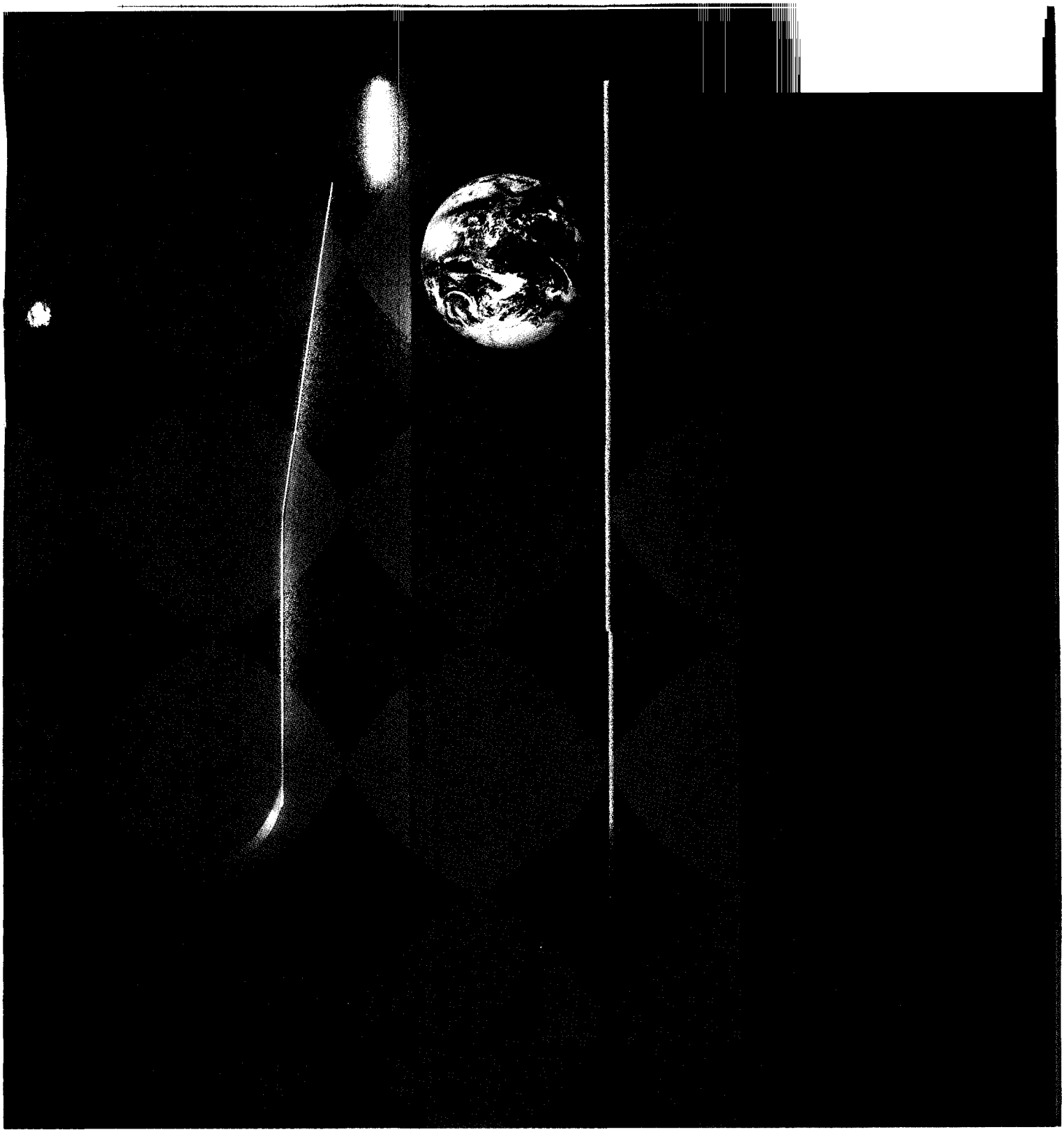

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their weary faces, the kids on the workout machines have been waiting for him for some time. They all wear name tags. "What a fucking waste of time," mutters a local cameraman as Quayle talks to a tall thin boy named Brian on a treadmill. Perhaps it is, but it will be a lead item on tonight's broadcast. Quayle is fatherly. He rubs Brian on the back and says, "Good luck to you kid. We're counting on you." When he leaves, a worried nurse comes running over to Brian. It turns out he's been on the treadmill for longer than he should, waiting for Quayle to turn up. "O.K., Brian, that's enough, you can stop," says the nurse.

Meanwhile, having taken up the Bush health care plan as his cause, Quayle delivers a talk in the hospital auditorium. It is incomprehensible. He advocates government regulation of the health insurance industry at the same time that he bashes Clinton for wanting the government to be more involved in health care. Two nurses down in front pass a note. It says, "What is he talking about?" As Quayle finishes, another journalist leans over and whispers to me, "That was pathetic. Embarrassing. We could have done better with five minutes' preparation." What he phones in to his paper is, however, respectful.

Tuesday. 12:15 p.m. College Station, Texas.

Everywhere he goes he is surrounded by soldiers and police, like the leader of a junta. The police motorcycles escort us past the site for the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum and onto the campus of Texas A&M. By the time we arrive every seat in the basketball arena is filled, there is a line down the block of people who want in, yet there is not a Clinton supporter in sight. It is the largest rally Quayle has addressed yet.

Inside are about 7,000 like-minded kids with buzz cuts. Some are wearing knee-high brown boots with spurs. They wave signs that say Gig-Em Dan! Gigging is what you call it when you skewer a live frog on a spike. The kids are all yelling for Quayle to skewer Clinton on a spike. And any time the warm-up speaker says "Aggie," "America," or "Fightin' Texas Aggie Spirit," the kids go ape, shouting something that sounds like Whoop! Whoop! Whoop! I grab the kid next to me and ask him what is going on with all the Whoop-Whoop-Whooping. He smiles and says, "It's an Aggie Thang. It's called the Whoop. Whenever something good happens we do it." Soon a man named Sheriff Ron Miller takes the stage and does what could have been a parody. All fat and sweaty he jumps up and shouts:

"Whatawegonnadotomistahslickwillie?"

The place goes nuts. Of course, we all know what we're going to do to Mistah Slick Willie. We're going to Gig-em!

"That'swhatmakesyaAggies," he says. "That'swhatmakesyaspecial."

You think that it couldn't possibly get any louder. But then the warm-up speaker takes the mike from Sheriff Ron Miller and says—I swear—"Now we're going to do some yells." This must be a joke, I think, a little piece of self-directed irony. But no. It immediately becomes clear that the noise they were making before was, by local standards, modest. Two kids in uniform take to the stage and semaphore the crowd into a Holy Rollerish frenzy.

At last Quayle is introduced. He is "a man who is more in touch with our values—Aggie values—than the liberal media or the Hollywood elite will ever be." For fifteen minutes he pushes all the right buttons—impugning Clinton's patriotism, dumping on Congress, extolling Aggie values, and praising the Aggie football team. As the crowd froths I spot Quayle's press director, David Beckwith, curled around a pole, giggling with delight.

Fingers in my ears, I go looking for subversives. I find four black people, three of whom appear up in the rafters, trying to unfurl a long sign that reads: The Only Thing Worse Than An Ignorant Republican Is Dan Quayle. They are quickly landed upon by a handful of large, young Aggies, who crumple the sign and escort them out the back. Following them I learn the reason why all of Quayle's rallies attract only supporters. Democrats are convincingly dissuaded from turning up. When Joseph Gourrier, head of the local chapter of the NAACP, tried to get into the arena with a sign that read What About Haiti? he was stopped, first by a member of the University Police Department, and then by a member of the Secret Service, who ripped up his sign.

Wednesday, September 23 9:00 a.m. Fort Worth, Texas.

Having spent the night here and delivered a fairly clean speech in the morning on "Bill Clinton's Flip-Flops," Quayle gives a series of short interviews to the local media. He is surprisingly nervous, relaxing and smiling only after the camera switches off. What is more, he doesn't answer any questions directly. He never does. An interview with Dan Quayle sounds like it is being filtered through a second language by two inept translators:

> Q: Does it bother you that Ross Perot might get back in the race?
> A: I will say this about Ross Perot's supporters. They deserve a lot of credit.

But soon he's back in his stride. He loves to walk around and shake hands; he's good at it. He is forever striking faux casual poses—leaning against buildings, slumping in chairs, sitting on tables. It may be his way of refusing to admit that he isn't capable of handling the challenge without special preparation. There is something brave in the way he fights the perpetual assault on his dignity. On our way out of town the motorcade suddenly swerves off the highway and into a shopping mall.

"Impromptu Stop!" someone hollers.

We pile out of the press van and onto the street and run to catch the precious moment. The thought that something authentic might occur leads a couple of hundred people—half of them carrying guns or cameras—to wash through the wide corridors of the shopping mall in the vice president's wake, knocking over garbage cans and striking fear in the hearts of the elderly.

Up ahead, a short, heavyset Hispanic woman in a red

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apron is rearranging chocolate chip cookies in her display case. She looks up and is startled when three men from the Secret Service charge behind her counter.

"Cameras!" hollers one of them.

From around the bend rushes another pack, bearing cameras and microphones. They too push behind the cookie counter. There isn't much space back there, so the woman is mashed up against her glass cookie case. She looks back nervously, then sees Dan Quayle flying around the bend. The vice president marches up to the counter and begins his routine.

Whatever the Hispanic woman jammed up against her glass cookie case may be thinking, she is sticking to small talk. She nods along—smiling on cue for the cameras—as Quayle chats on. Beneath the eyes of a dozen cameras there occur two genuinely authentic transactions. The first is cookies for money. The second is attention for cooperation. The woman, content with her sliver of celebrity, falls naturally into the role of designated real person. At last the vice president takes his change and moves off.

"Move! Move!" someone shouts.

As quickly as they arrived, the vice president and his followers are gone. The woman returns to her display unfazed.

"Did you know who that was?" I ask her.

She looks up. "No. I didn't see his name tag."

"That was the vice president of the United States."

"I knew he looked familiar. . . . "

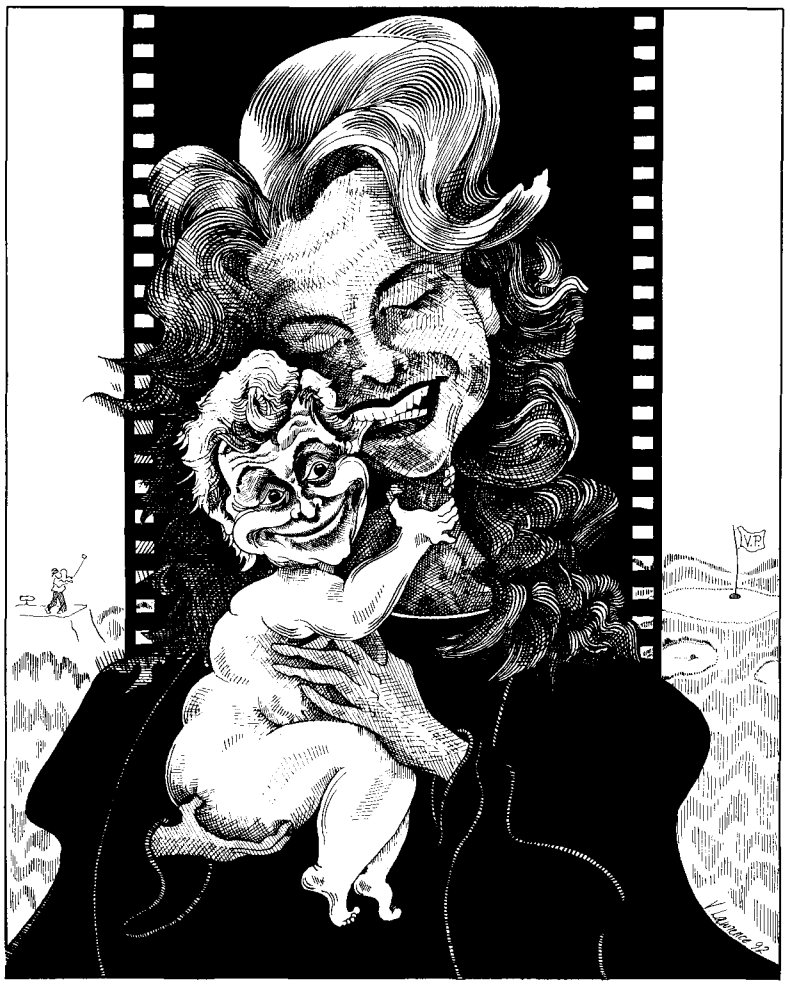
Later, as Quayle emerges from the shopping mall, he is approached by a local newscaster. "What did you learn from the people?" she asks.

"That they're on our side," he says.

Wednesday. 12:50 p.m. Oklahoma City's Bicentennial Park.

The outdoor rally opens with a pert blond singing "Proud to Be An American." The Clinton supporters are roped off across the street, but they are loud enough to save Quayle the trouble of wondering how it is that he can be the acting second to the least popular incumbent in modern American history and yet never once encounter protest. Once again the vice president plays to the higher instincts of the people. He paints Clinton as un-American. ("Do we want a president who says that America is the mockery of the world?") But this time he gets a little too excited, and strays from his notes. An endearing eagerness passes across his face—like he's about to show his mother a trophy. Then he takes the plunge:

"Now, in Dallas this morning. In Fort Worth. In Fort Worth this morning. We. Uh. I made a speech. About Bill Clinton and Bill Clinton's. Bill Clinton and the flip-flops. Bill Clinton. Flip-flops. I was going to just give the top ten. And I went through the record and there's hundreds of them. So I said I was right in the first place. Let's just focus on ten flip-flops. And I gave them the top ten. And there's a sign back there. [*points to the back of the crowd*] I like that. Go Home Flip-Flop Bill. Show that up."



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The recurring complaint from the world-weary Quayle aides on Air Force Two is that the media has mistreated their boss by playing up moments such as these. There is some truth to this. Several of the journalists traveling with the vice president tell me that they are on a "gaffe and death watch," i.e., they are only interested if Quayle misspells or gets shot. But there is also some truth in the opposite claim that the system is far too tolerant of Quayle's inadequacies. The vice president can spend two days ducking questions, sounding not quite up to his job, and promoting bigotry without anyone ever hearing about it. The small number of journalists have no time to do anything but record the script written by the vice president's handlers. There is also a kind of loophole built into the political process for intellectual incompetence; since it may improve the candidate's chances if audiences don't fully understand what he is proposing, he can pretend that it is shrewd to have a mind like a fog machine. No, the real wonder is that Dan Quayle was ever found out. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Personal and Otherwise

Sydney Pollack and Judy Davis play a New York married couple in Woody Allen's **Husbands and Wives** (TriStar). Strikingly fine, they are strikingly different kinds of actors. Pollack, who once taught acting and has spent most of his career as a director, showed in *Tootsie* and *Death Becomes Her* that he is a technically keen actor with brusque, commanding good sense and humanity. Versatility, on the evidence so far, is not his game. Get Pollack, seems to be the cry, if you want irresistible urban verity—the Northeast and Southern Californian kinds, at least.

Davis, by contrast, specializes in not specializing. She is almost always praised for her work but rarely for a chief attribute, her range. A provincial Australian dreamer in *My Brilliant Career*, George Sand in *Impromptu*, Miss Quested in *A Passage to India*, she rivals Meryl Streep in variety (and she has a better voice). Here, in the most demanding role in the film, she plays a dissatisfied woman, impatient with herself, taking it out on herself and the world; and Davis does it with no smudge of actorish display. The woman, correct accent and all, is simply discovered by the camera in midlife.

Most of the other actors are serviceable. Mia Farrow plays Allen's wife in her customary needlepoint, satisfactory way. Liam Neeson, the Irish hulk, is agreeable as a quiet sex-bomb lodged in the vicinity of troubled women. Juliette Lewis, the husky-voiced ductile adolescent of *Cape Fear*, is here a creative-writing student whose teacher is Allen; and she renders subtly a young woman's realizations of power over an older man. Benno C. Schmidt Jr., former president of Yale, has a couple of solo scenes in which he addresses the camera as Farrow's ex-husband. Those who recognize him may enjoy the gag.

The only blunder in the cast is Allen himself, playing a writer and teacher of writing. The kindest thing to be said about his acting, here and elsewhere, is that, at his best, he looks like the author-director showing the real actor of the part how he wants it done. Allen keeps writing parts for Dustin Hoffman, and then he plays them himself.

Allen's screenplay is a superior example of one form that he especially likes (as against, for instance, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*). *Husbands and Wives* simply explores some New York lives for the drama they—seemingly—contain naturally; then, with a lacing of pungent wit, he intertwines them to ironic effect. The result is a comedy-drama that exists for our cozy recognitions, rather than for our enlightenment or expansion.

The mixture, as in *Manhattan*, includes a relationship between Allen and a very young woman, but it's different here. There is no sex; the woman is 20, not 17 (in maturity, this is much more than a three-year difference); and it centers on a commonplace hazard—for both parties—the teacher-student relationship. (Diction note: Throughout, Professor Allen keeps referring to his class as "pupils." I've been around universities for several decades, and I've never heard that word. It's always "students.")

As director, Allen seemed in some of his recent films to be standing free of imitation. Now he is imitating again—not his former master, Bergman, but Godard. The hand-held camera whipping around (it spoils the whole first sequence), the abrupt jump cuts, the interviewing of characters who face the camera and speak to unexplained questioners—all these are Godard hallmarks of the 1960s. Their relevance here is obscure.

Still, in addition to his work with the actors, Allen puts in some nice touches. He directs delicately a scene in a taxi with himself and Lewis. The professor has given her a manuscript of his to read, and she comments on it as they ride. She begins with admiration, but as he keeps questioning her, she progresses to increasingly severe criticism. He keeps getting angrier. Allen holds the camera on her, his questions coming in from the side. This puts the burden on Lewis to carry the scene, which she certainly does. It also makes the scene more harrowing for him—conveyed solely through his voice—and it dramatizes her small triumph, her assertion of self over a man who, willy-nilly, has dominated her.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Best Intentions. *Ingmar Bergman's screenplay about his parents' troubled courtship and early marriage, empathically directed by Bille August. Extraordinary. (Reviewed 8/10/92)* **Bob Roberts.** *Tim Robbins wrote, directed, and stars in this sizzling satire of political campaigning. More light than heat, but the light shows Robbins as a really gifted filmmaker. (10/5/92)* **A Brief History of Time.** *Errol Morris's lucid documentary about Stephen Hawking's life, with just enough of the work, helpfully explained, to make the life all the more fascinating. (9/28/92)* **Feed.** *Also a documentary—about this year's New Hampshire primary. Just by following the candidates carefully, the film becomes a comedy. Especially funny: the candidates waiting for T.V. cues before speaking. (10/5/92)* **—SK**

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Whatever its flaws, *Husbands and Wives* is a highly personal film. **Hero** (Columbia) is exactly the opposite: it's a story-conference picture, concocted by a group. We sense this, less because several people were involved than because the picture's only reason for existing is to be a hit. The story is by Laura Ziskin & Alvin Sargent and David Webb Peoples (the ampersand means a team, I guess, plus a third party), and the screenplay is by Peoples, who wrote *Unforgiven.*

The time is now, but the picture smells of the 1930s. (The weep-along score is sheer '30s.) The basis, as in so many movies of those days, is a gimmick. Dustin Hoffman plays a petty crook, on parole before being sentenced, who is driving in the country when an airliner crashes in the road ahead of him. He is the only witness, and after some hesitation—he's leery of getting involved in things—he helps to open the door of the burning plane and to rescue the fifty-four passengers. His face is muddied, his identity unknown, and after fire engines and ambulances arrive, he slinks away, feeling not much more than irritation at having lost a shoe.

On the plane was a star T.V. newswoman, Geena Davis, and she makes it her professional business to find the unknown hero who saved her and the others. Her T.V. station offers a million-dollar reward to the man if he will step forward. Up steps a drifter, Andy Garcia, who had encountered Hoffman after the crash. Garcia claims the reward. Since it turns out that he really was a hero in Vietnam, his claim rings true.

Hoffman, watching T.V., realizes he is being cheated, but he can't get through the mob of media people and guards to confront Garcia. The complicated plot winds along to a sequence in which Garcia and Hoffman are seated on a high ledge, after Garcia has threatened suicide and an immense crowd has gathered. The two men work out a deal. In effect, this finishes the story, although it continues for a while.

Garcia's threatened leap is not the only reminder of *Meet John Doe.* The public's quick adoration of the hero, the role of the media in shaping "spontaneous" public response are further reminders of Frank Capra. There are other reminders, too—of James Thurber's story, "The Greatest Man in the World," about a sleazebag who becomes a popular hero, and of Peer Gynt's soliloquy on an onion. (Davis, accepting a T.V. award, peels an onion to make a point about news stories.) Some of Peoples's dialogue is lively, however; and though the whole thing is arrantly synthetic, it is, as many Hollywood contraptions have been, more entertaining than it sensibly ought to be.

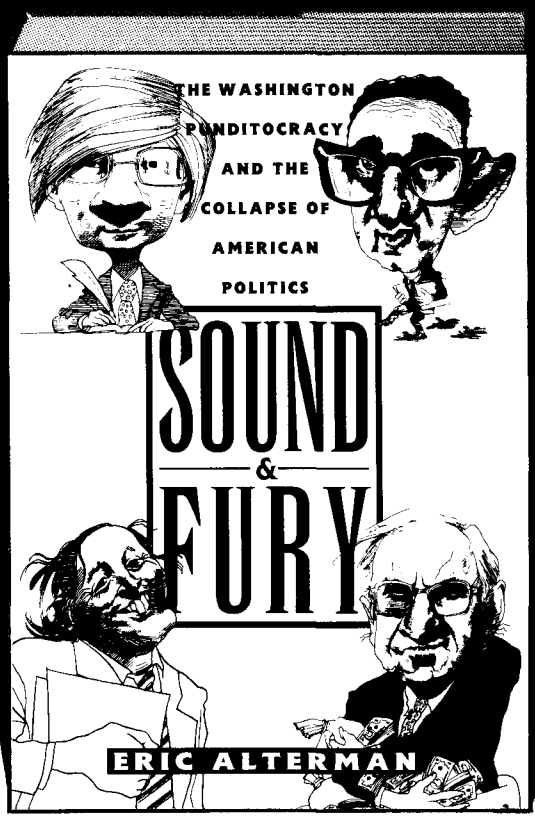
Stephen Frears directs well, I'm almost sorry to say. At home in England, he made his reputation with films—e.g., *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*—that were highly personal, pressing responses to a culture. Frears is now just another talent for hire.

Hoffman is like a scruffy terrier here, clinging to the story with clenched jaws, irritating but admirably persistent. Garcia shows a new inner resource, an appealing quietness. Davis is really funny and really moving; Capra would have liked the way, à la Jean Arthur, she brings tears to the eyes in a down-to-earth way. Chevy Chase, who appears as her boss, is unbilled. I don't know why: he isn't any less unusual than he usually is. •

Has the pen become mightier than the vote?

Nobody elected them, but political pundits like George Will, John McLaughlin, Robert Novak, and William Safire wield immense power. They can define issues, make and break reputations, change presidential priorities, even lead the country to war. But are they truly independent thinkers, or slaves of Beltway cronyism? In *Sound and Fury* Eric Alterman questions the credentials of today's wise men, and suggests that their disproportionate influence is a sign and cause of America's political decline.

"The best book yet on the insider culture of Washington where public officials and elite pundits produce the mumbo-jumbo that passes for democratic dialogue."
—Bill Moyers



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Where is the best American art to be found? Not in the so-called art world.

The Art Nobody Knows

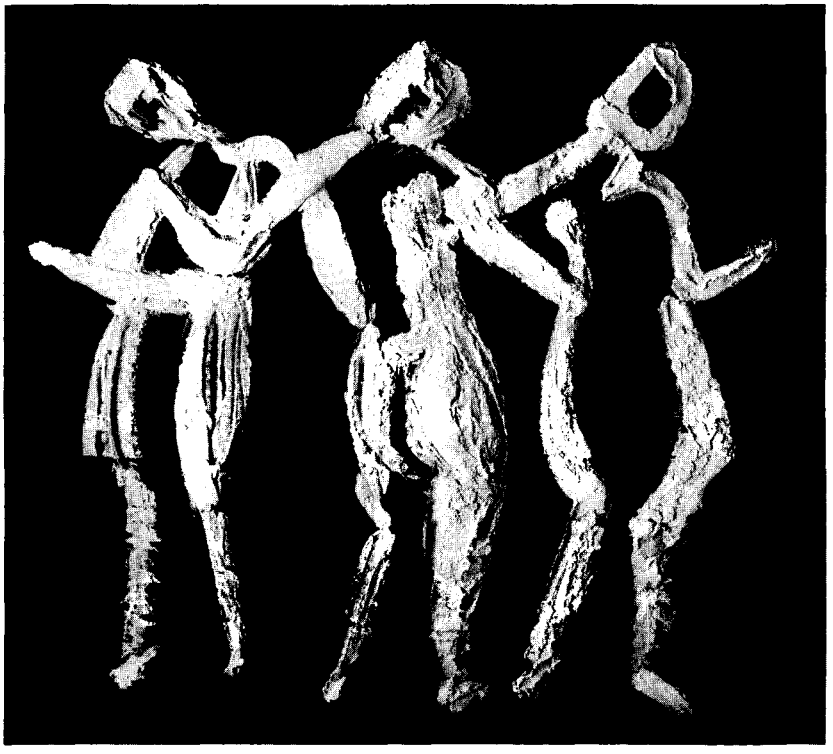
By Jed Perl

I.

A few years ago, when Cindy Sherman started showing her big Cibachrome self-portraits and it seemed as if every hot artist in New York was into photographic imagery, an editor called me to ask if I'd be interested in doing a story about Sherman. Not just about Sherman, actually, but about the whole phenomenon of artists who appropriate photography: Sherrie Levine had been rephotographing classic photographs for a couple of years, and Doug and Mike Starn were beginning to cause a stir with their collages made of stained and ripped photographs. The editor knew that I didn't have any patience for Sherman's work. In fact, he was interested in me in part because I'd already written a thumbs-down piece. My opinions, he assured me over lunch, weren't a problem; I could say anything I wanted in the article. He wasn't interested in whether the work was good or bad. He was interested in the phenomenon of Cindy Sherman.

In the week or so after his call I began to think about the whole project with increasing trepidation. I didn't think I could do the piece, and at lunch I explained why. I disliked Sherman's work passionately; but my decision was based on something more than my reaction to the work. My feeling was that Sherman's notoriety was basically a public relations gambit, and I didn't want to become a part of the p.r. At this point my lunch companion began to act rather uneasy. He had meant this as an opportunity for me, and he found my qualms more than a little bizarre. The more we talked, the more hostile he became. He accused me of careerism; and an odd kind of reverse careerism it was that would have me turning down what was clearly a major assignment. He was so upset that he suggested that I pay for my half of our meal.

Things calmed down a little toward the espresso, and he asked if there was another story that I'd like to do. There was. I suggested that in fact there is a whole other art world out there—what a lot of us have come to call, shorthand style, the real art world. There are artists who are just working along, evolving, in boom times and in bust times, and I proposed that they deserve a hell of a lot more attention than they get. I explained that I didn't want to add fuel to the Sherman boom precisely because booms like this one are sucking life and energy out of the other art world. Art stars like Sherman—and Salle and Schnabel—are distorting the art scene. Their exhibitions are not events within the evolving life of forms; they are responses to market pressures. The mass appeal of an artist like Schnabel has everything to do with his indifference to what ought to be an artist's most intimate concern—the internal logic of a work of art. And the artists who do care about what goes on inside art are being left with fewer and fewer outlets for their work. By now the serious artists are desperate; they're gasping for air.



THE THREE GRACES BY BARBARA GOODSTEIN (1985)

Courtesy Bowery Gallery, New York

As it happened, I was able to name at least one member of this other art world that the editor happened to know. "Oh her," he said. "Is she important?" I told him that to many people she is one of the best sculptors alive, but he seemed nonplussed by the thought, and also by my idea. He'd called me up to commission an article about an art star, not to find out that there is a wholly different, unglamorous, half-buried scene out there. This Sherman article wasn't meant to inform, it was meant to amuse.

You don't have to know anything about art to know that the art world is surefire cultural entertainment—and that's just about all the editor knew. A bit of Sherman bashing would be okay; after all, a little outrageousness on the part of artists and critics helps give the

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Jed Perl is the author most recently of *Gallery Going: Four Seasons in the Art World* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). He is at work on *New Art City*, a study of painters and sculptors in Manhattan between 1950 and 1970.

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art world its appeal. People like to hear that the art stars are overinflated. That is part of the titillation. But when you tell an editor that something more is at stake, that the hype may actually hurt somebody, that is too much. Nobody wants to believe that the art stars are destroying the art world. If that's the case, things could get depressing. One could even end up feeling guilty for having treated the art world as a playground.

Of course the editor found somebody who would get the job done. A couple of months later I opened up the magazine and there was Cindy Sherman, larger than life.

II.

The glamor factor in the art world is not anything new. Art chat has been keeping people amused, annoyed, seduced, irate for a very long time. In America, the modern publicity mills began to crank up with the Armory Show of 1913, but only really got going in 1949, when *Life* magazine gave its readers a good laugh by suggesting that Jackson Pollock, a man who dripped paint, just might be the greatest artist alive. Once the public had howled over Pollock, it was screaming for more. Pop Art was hog heaven, and everybody hopped on the art merry-go-round. If you couldn't afford a Jasper Johns flag, at least you could afford the American flag canisters that were sold at hip shops like Azuma. By the 1980s it was taken for granted that Wall Street money fueled the carnival, and everybody was talking about the waiting list at Mary Boone and the size of the latest art star's loft in SoHo.

Looking back on all of this, there are those who will say that my talk with the editor was just business as usual. The media, after all, has its share of fairly sophisticated status quo types, and if you begin to say that the hype has gone out of control, they'll probably tell you that it was just as bad back in the nineteenth century, when Baudelaire and Daumier were complaining about the philistines at the Salons. But of course the fact that things were bad once upon a time doesn't mean that they're O.K. today. In any event, things are *not* all bad. Far from it. In the galleries there is good stuff to be seen. In the studios of New York—and, for all I know, across the country—artists in their 30s and 40s and 50s and 60s are making the incremental developments that are what art is all about. But even as the headlines have shifted from Julian Schnabel's plate smashings to Jesse Helms's NEA bashings, the most important story of the art world remains untold.

The support system of galleries and grants and collectors and curators and publications that makes it possible for artists to have slow-developing, serious careers is in a state of near total collapse. A couple of examples come quickly to mind. A painter of comic surrealist abstractions, who has for years survived on a cult following, has now broken through to a major statement, but he cannot get it shown in New York City. A landscape painter who, at the age of 49, ranks with Marquet and Dufy is still showing, along with some of the best artists of his generation, in a cooperative gallery and can barely get reviewed in New York.

Courtesy Bowery Gallery, New York

KANSAS CITY BY STANLEY LEWIS (1984)

There is simply no longer a support structure that nourishes these incremental developments. This is what you hear if you talk to the artists. Living in the midst of this overinflated art world, the artists no longer know where to turn. Fewer and fewer shows get reviewed; fewer and fewer galleries are willing to make the commitment to an artist's gradual development. The art world, to the extent that it supports a vital evolutionary process, is on the verge of extinction. The artists—let me emphasize—are still at work. But they are in despair, and their despair is turning into a masochistic malaise that threatens them from within even as career options disappear.

What follows is a description of an art scene in crisis. Some of the names that I am going to mention will be unfamiliar, but the unfamiliarity of this story is a part—a big part—of its significance.

Who exactly are these artists who aren't getting what they need and deserve? I could name many, each a different case, each unable to get a proper hearing. Briefly, I want to point to two artists. Both are in their late 40s (the age that de Kooning was when he had his first show), both have for years shown at small cooperative galleries in New York City, both remain virtually invisible beyond the inside circles that have sustained them. (They now exhibit at the Bowery Gallery, where the painter Deborah Rosenthal, to whom I am married, also shows.) Barbara Goodstein is certainly the most original sculptor of her generation. The landscape paintings that Stanley Lewis produced between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s put him in the top ranks of his generation.

Goodstein's sculpture is in low relief, and her technique is utterly her own. She works in plaster on plywood boards, building up the plaster into reliefs that are a sculptor's reconsideration of the traditions of painterly painting. Her subjects are the figure and the landscape, but everything in her work is simplified, reduced, so that what meets the eye is a sequence of iconic, telegraphic signs. A panoramic landscape is transformed into a couple of undulating arabesques. A house next to a tree is evoked with the deliberate brevity of Chinese calligraphy. Some of Goodstein's finest figure pieces are variations on classical themes—the Three Graces, the Pieta—and here she seems to feel the pressure of the whole tradition pushing her forward. Often she paints the boards black or dark green, so that the pats and lines

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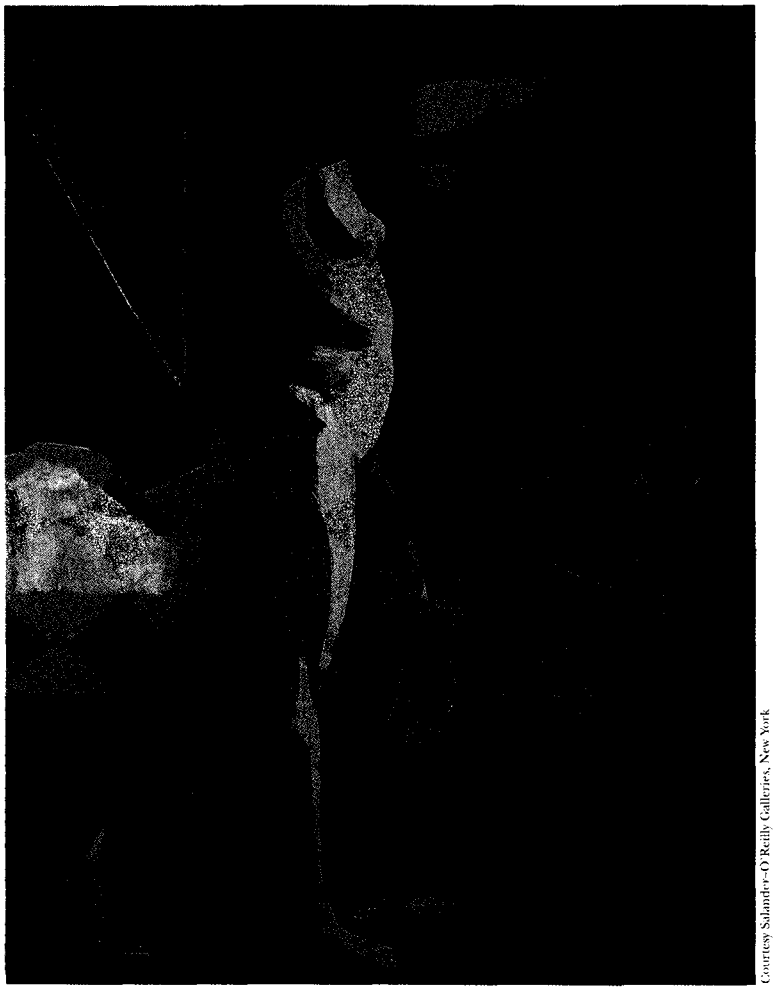
and jabs of plaster stand out like stars in a night sky. Her figures are summations, abbreviations. (The cycle of Three Graces is her memory of Raphael remembering Pompeii.) The work, with its mix of conventional sources and passionate, unconventional methods, is astonishingly concise.

Stanley Lewis's work, also representational, is also informed by a taste for abstraction. Lewis has a gift for ripe, painterly surfaces, and for plangent, gray-purple-green tonalities. His landscapes may remind people of the work of contemporary English expressionists, of Leon Kossoff and especially Frank Auerbach. The jagged forms of Lewis's landscapes might even strike some people as borrowed from Auerbach, but I find Lewis at his best to be an infinitely more satisfying artist than Auerbach ever is. In Lewis's smallish paintings, the angles and the elisions that create a scrunched, broken-up sense of space occasionally really add up: they give us a complete view. And no one has rendered the odd edgy spaces in suburban America (the sides of roads, the gas stations) with quite the lyric delicacy of Lewis. (His America, shambly and appealing, is not unlike Kossoff's London.) Some of Lewis's admirers have never forgiven me for writing a couple of years ago that there has been a precipitous decline in Lewis's work; but even if he never regains the strength that he had as a painter roughly between 1975 and 1985, Lewis has still earned a place among the most significant artists of the day.

I have intentionally mentioned artists who come out of a single community because I wish to give readers a sense that there are communities out there. Indeed, there are many such communities. Some consist of artists who work abstractly, some of artists whose work is representational to one degree or another, and these communities often overlap and interpenetrate. Part of the reason that Barbara Goodstein and Stanley Lewis are too little known is that they come out of an underground art scene where tradition and innovation are still believed to be reconcilable. This is an idea to which you may hear lip service paid in New York, but as a lived ideal it isn't any longer a clever career move.

Good work—work by artists who range in age from the late 30s to the early 70s—isn't always entirely ignored, but it rarely receives the concentrated, serious attention that it deserves. Why isn't there more focus on the abstract sculpture of Geoffrey Heyworth and the figure sculpture of Natalie Charkow, on the abstract paintings of Spencer Gregory, Bill Barrell, Pat Adams, Shirley Jaffe, and Trevor Winkfield, on the geometricized realities that we encounter in the work of Jacqueline Lima, Richard Chiriani, and Alfred Russell, and on the various kinds of painterly painting that are done by Rita Baragona, Richard La Presti, Carl Plansky, Louisa Matthiasdottir, and Ned Small? I could name more artists who are equally gifted, equally deserving of additional attention.



Courtesy Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York

MORNING BY LELAND BELL (1978-81)

Goodstein's and Lewis's work is rarely seen by anybody beyond a small circle of admirers. Despite an artist's considerable ability to go it alone, the long-term effects of such a restricted audience cannot be healthy. The absence of significant financial rewards is one problem, and by no means a minor one. (Lewis, especially, has had a significant teaching career, which can fill the financial void.) But even if we assume that committed artists do find a way to survive financially, there remains a larger question. What happens to an artist whose development receives so little public recognition? I am not talking here about unfulfilled promise. I am referring to artists who have done an immense amount and now, at mid-career, are at the point where they have to find it within themselves to do even more. Can artists keep on doing their damndest when the wide world doesn't give a damn?

The question needs to be addressed right now. For a generation is coming into its own, and it can't get to its audience. Both Goodstein and Lewis owe a debt to the painter Leland Bell, who died a year ago at the age of 69. Bell's boldly simplified figure compositions suggest ways in which representation can learn from abstraction, and both Goodstein's and Lewis's work can be seen as an extension of some of Bell's ideas. But a comparison between his career and theirs makes it clear how much more dangerous it is to be an independent artist today than it was a generation or two ago, when Bell was making his way.

Bell is often described as the archetypal art world outsider. True, he hardly ever sold a painting. But he had a distinguished dealer in Robert Schoelkopf, and over the years he was the subject of feature articles in *Arts*, *Art News* (by John Ashbery), *Art in America* (by John Hollander), and *The New York Times*, and in 1987 he finally received a retrospective at the Phillips Collection in Washington. Barbara Goodstein, while her sculpture

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doesn't look anything like Bell's painting, is the artist who I expect will carry Bell's brand of radically simplified representation into the next century, yet she has never had a dealer committed to her work, has never been the subject of a feature article in an art magazine, has never even had a work in a museum show. The difference in their careers tells you something about diminished opportunities for serious art since Bell arrived in New York in the 1940s. And we're talking here about diminishments from already disappointed expectations: at least during the past twenty years, not a single painting by Bell has been shown in a museum in New York City, a fact that ought to shock us, except that by now we are inured to the way the art establishment treats its best and its brightest.

III.

In order to understand why it is so much harder for authentic independent work to prosper than it was a generation ago, we have to look beyond career specifics to the overall structure of the art scene. The art world that was born in New York after World War II is now well into its fifth decade, and what we've been seeing in the past few years is a systematic crisis. We have reached the point where nothing in the art world any longer really seems to work—not in a way that encourages major art, anyway. We have entered, in sum, the era of the dysfunctional art world. And to understand the disorder, we must understand what made the scene work (often haltingly and half-heartedly) in the first place.

Basically, the New York art world has always had two dimensions, a public one and a private one. But to the extent that things ever really functioned, the public art world was an outgrowth—and at best a reflection—of the private art world, of the artist's art world. It is in the artists' art world that the life of forms goes on. The public art world is of value only insofar as it reflects significant developments in the private art world.

It's not difficult to point to some of the elements that made up each side of this art world from the 1950s into the 1970s. The public art world consisted of things of which a general educated audience might be aware: events at the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney, art coverage in magazines such as *Time* and *Life*, the lineup at international shows like the Venice Biennale, a few exhibits at blue chip commercial galleries such as Sidney Janis and Leo Castelli. The artists' art world encompassed all those things—but it included much more. Artists saw the blue chip galleries as fitting into a wider perspective of galleries and shows, which included some important artist-run cooperatives and artist-organized exhibitions (such as the Tenth Street Annuals). The artists were certainly aware of the coverage in the glossy magazines, but they were also concerned with the discussions in the artists' clubs, and the hundreds of short reviews of exhibitions that appeared in the art magazines each and every month and added up to a blow by blow account of what artists were doing.

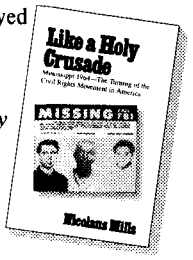
The line between the public art world and the private art world was not always clear. The art magazines themselves had both a public and private aspect: one might say that the feature articles in the art magazines were public, while the short reviews of one person shows were a part of the private world. Art coverage in literary and political magazines such as *The Nation* and *Partisan Review*, despite the small readerships, could span the two realms, as did certain galleries such as Betty Parsons's and Martha Jackson's.

The essential point is that the values and the reputations that dominated the public art world were generally formed in the artists' art world. Moreover, the lines between public and private were never entirely fixed. The notoriety that artists like de Kooning and Pollock achieved in the '50s and '60s was an outgrowth of their downtown reputations. I don't meant to paint some golden age. Far from it: the gonzo careerism that we think of as characteristic of the '80s has its origins in the '50s, and there were always reputations that were largely shaped by the public art world. But the fact is that a great deal of the art that made it uptown had its origins downtown, in a culture for which public renown, while desirable, was not a formative value. Thus, in the '50s and to a lesser extent all the way into the '70s, the public art world could be said to be an imperfect but still pretty reliable mirror of the artists' art world, where pictorial values were paramount.

More than that, there was a sense among artists, and among those who followed art closely, that a public reputation was only of value to the extent that it was seconded by artists. At the Cedar Tavern it was said that even those who had succeeded uptown would ultimately be judged downtown. Some of this was lip service, but some of it was not. The story is told of how delighted Jackson Pollock was when Earl Kerkam, a marvelous painter of figures and still lifes who had an archetypal artists' art world reputation, told him that some recent work was "not bad." The point of

"A clear and marvelously evocative account."
—David J. Garrow

"Moving, almost unbearably poignant....No one trying to understand where we've gone wrong since then can afford to miss Mills' tender, clear-eyed account of the early hopes and fault-lines of the civil rights movement."
—Jim Sleeper, *Newsday*



Nicolaus Mills
Like a Holy Crusade
Mississippi 1964—
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the anecdote is that Pollock, despite his public fame, hungered for a kind of approval that only the artists' art world could give him.

One of the best ways to understand the range of art that the artist's art world embraced is to read the collected criticism of John Ashbery. Ashbery, who wrote art criticism for a living from the late '50s deep into the '80s, comes closer to an artist's viewpoint than any other regular critic of the period. In his criticism the famous and the not-so-famous and the barely known are discussed next to one another, and are basically judged not in terms of their success in the big public world, but in terms of the value that their work has among their peers.

What has happened since the '60s, and with increasing speed since the '80s, is that the public art world and the private art world have ceased to be sides of a single integrated organism. The point when everything began to change was the explosion of Pop Art in the mid-'60s. It was then that the public art world became self-perpetuating, tied to market values rather than aesthetic values. Pop Art's subject matter dramatized the change: it was subject matter that had no private meaning for artists. Andy Warhol led the way. He came out of the world of advertising, and he defined a new kind of art world career: the career that is conducted entirely in the public eye. In Warhol's wake a whole culture has grown up, a culture that by now includes its own educational institutions, such as the California Institute of the Arts, where students are taught nothing but how to have public art world careers. And as the public art world has become self-perpetuating, the private art world has become increasingly isolated, fragmented, frozen.

IV.

When I talk with literary people about what's going on in the art world, they often see parallels between the art hype and the book hype, and to some extent I suppose the analogies are good. As a parallel to the artists' artists, to people like Barbara Goodstein and Stanley Lewis, literary friends will think of writers' writers, poets' poets. But there is reason to believe that the art world is even more vulnerable to media forces than the literary world. Works of art, which can be taken in with a single glance, create an illusion of instant capture, instant expertise. While even a vaguely credible opinion about a novel will involve putting in the number of hours it takes to get through at least a part of the book, all it takes to have a vaguely credible opinion about a painting by David Salle is a swerve of one's head around a gallery. Art provides people with the promise of instant access, with culture bites. And the art that gets the attention satisfies that need for quick satisfaction—all up front, no nuances, no mysteries to unravel.

The perception of art as a high class fix is underlined by the way that art is marketed. A lot of the news in the past decade has been about the crazy prices at the auctions and the waiting lists at the blue chip galleries. This news can make people feel increasingly distanced from contemporary art. Thirty years ago, collecting contemporary art was something that many educated people did, at least in a small way. If one couldn't afford the paintings, one could buy original graphics by Picasso and Matisse, not to mention inexpensive graphics by contemporary Americans. In fact, it is still possible to collect works of quality for a few thousand dollars. (Works by Goodstein or Lewis are often less than a thousand; and before Leland Bell died, his small paintings could be had for a few thousand dollars.) But the news of the immense prices that are being paid for works by Schnabel and Basquiat tends to make people believe that all good art is expensive. And so we're losing the old audience of sometime art collectors. The hype makes people feel that art is out of their reach. (Meanwhile, no matter how much of an advance an author gets for his or her next book, readers know that they can buy it for twenty or twenty-five dollars.)

Museums have become the places where the contemporary art hype reaches the boiling point. The museums expect to draw audiences of a size of which they never dreamed before, and they quite understandably feel that this enlarged public needs to be given a carefully shaped and predigested view of contemporary art. And so, in order to create this neatly tailored picture, curators willfully deny the variety of the contemporary scene. Even as the number of artists at work has expanded geometrically, the number of artists included in major surveys has plummeted. A generation ago the important contemporary overviews held at the Whitney in New York and the Carnegie in Pittsburgh contained 100 or more artists; today they often include a half, or a quarter, of that number.

It is true that the old surveys were often criticized for their eclecticism and their aimlessness, but in retrospect we

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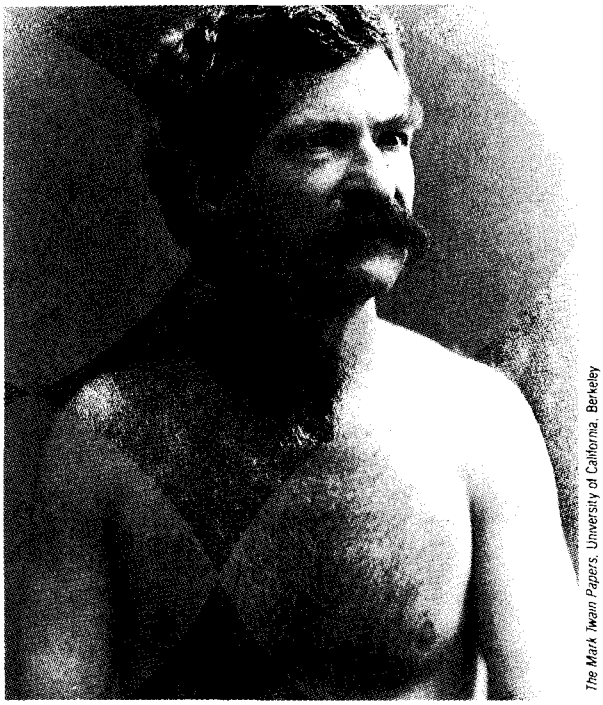
can see that at least they gave a large number of artists some access to a museum audience. At the same time, they kept curators out of the god position that they have achieved in recent years. Those older surveys weren't summaries of trends, they were designed for an audience with some sophistication, an audience that could deal with the variety of contemporary developments. Today's surveys aren't really surveys at all, they're quickie summaries. Museumgoers may feel less overwhelmed, but from the artist's point of view the result is that there are far more artists jockeying for fewer places. That is, there's less chance of getting to the public. The new surveys are a big lie, snow jobs that distance the audience from what's really going on.

The changes in the survey shows are only one sign of the increasingly restricted opportunities that are open to artists who are determined to follow their own lights. Another problem is the art magazines, which have in the past twenty years largely abandoned their old job of reporting on what goes on in the galleries and instead have become publicity machines for the art stars and the art star wannabees. In the '50s and '60s any artist who managed to have a show in New York City was virtually guaranteed at least a brief review. These reviews really delved into the work. They were written by amazingly bright people, such as the artists Donald Judd, Sidney Tillim, and Fairfield Porter and the poet James Schuyler. The importance of short reviews for the art community cannot be overestimated. They amount to a kind of written conversation about art, a record of the dialogue that's going on among the artists. Yet now, with hundreds more galleries, fewer shows are reviewed than ever before.

Everywhere one looks there are similar signs of diminishing opportunities for serious work to be seen and discussed. In a recent issue of the *Art Journal*—published by the College Art Association, which is the professional organization for artists and art historians—the painter Philip Pearlstein pointed to a kind of censorship that is rarely often even recognized. He tells of sitting on art panels at the NEA and other institutions where the basic assumption was that certain styles in which the public art world isn't interested can simply be excluded from consideration. Among the styles Pearlstein cited were various kinds of representational painting, and what he calls traditional abstraction. Grants, even small ones, have sustained many unconventional artists; but in recent years most grant-giving processes have become hopelessly tied to the conventional values of the public art world.

We live in a trickle-down art world. Whatever attention and support don't go to the art stars go to their clones. Art teaching is dominated by the wannabees. And all they do is teach students to mimic art star values, which is all they, the teachers, know how to do. What's going on in the art schools may be the most disastrous development of all. In the past forty years, the teaching of art in structured academic settings has helped to sustain art in New York and the rest of the country. Far from being hiding places for failed artists, art departments have been places where artists who were too unconventional or independent to prosper in the market have been able to sustain an art culture of their own. After the war, artists, among them Ad Reinhardt and Mark Rothko, made Brooklyn College one of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the country's great art departments. In the early '70s, when I was planning to be a painter, some schools still had that kind of generative power, notably the painting department at the Kansas City Art Institute, under the direction of Wilbur Niewald, and the Graduate Program of Queens College, where Louis Finkelstein, Rosemarie Beck, and Gabriel Laderman, among others, were all teaching.

As late as the '70s, the academic network, the grant-giving network, and the gallery network were functioning much as they had in the '50s, and in some cases functioning better than they ever had before. In the '80s, however, every aspect of the art world came under the control of the art market mafia. Political correctness is only one element in the academic situation now. Equally troubling are the administrators who are all too conscious of the public art world and expect their departments to reflect its values. The bottom line is that the whole structure that has sustained art in this country has come to be dominated by public art world values—that is, by market-driven art. The artists who are committed remain, but they are frighteningly isolated.

V.

It's been a couple of years since the Wall Street money that fueled the art orgy of the '80s evaporated. From all sides there were announcements that the unholy marriage of Warholism and Reaganomics that had set the art world spinning had collapsed. Art hype, many imagined, was a thing of the past. And very rapidly auction prices plummeted and galleries that had scarcely been opened were closing their doors. This, at least, is the story that is generally told. It is accurate in some of its specifics: the unsold auction lots, the collapsing real estate values. But those who imagined that the insane expectations of the '80s—art as a fix, as an ever-changing decor—would die along with Drexel Burnham Lambert were totally mistaken. It is simply impossible that reputations on which so much attention has been lavished will be allowed to disappear. The people who hype art still believe that the hype has some sense to it. Thus one of the most depressing developments of the past couple of years has been the way that reputations that not even the trendies care about are pointlessly sustained. Who any longer gives a damn about Haim Steinbach's shelves lined with buyables? Yet the work is still reviewed in *The New York Times*.

Art-and-money hype may be replaced by art-and-politics hype, but the phenomenon of art world publicity as a form of highbrow escapism, we now know, is not only market driven. Something in the ineffable mix of art and glamor that attracted Wall Street to SoHo has survived all the red ink. And the nightmare is that what the art-and-money hype didn't make impossible, the art-and-politics hype has made impossible. A decade ago an artist painting small landscapes or abstractions would be told by dealers that what the money people wanted wasn't "just another landscape or abstraction," no matter how good. Now that same artist—if that artist happens to be a woman—will be told by many critics that she has no right to paint in a traditional genre, because those genres are male-dominated. And this is being said at the very moment when, for the first time in history, women are making those traditions their own, proving in the process that tradition is gender blind. The way that political art is marketed as a high-end consumer product can make the most heartfelt feelings look like another brand of radical chic. The financial hype and the political hype add up to the same thing: art loses out.

All through the '80s, of course, criticisms of the art world status quo had a certain cachet. Clearly there is an educated audience that wants to understand why things have gone so wrong. But in their own way the brilliant criticisms can be as destructive as the hype. When a witty writer turns the art world into a grotesque carnival, the result may be that people give up on contemporary art. And when that happens, good and dedicated artists are abandoned along with the hype artists. The only thing that I find more depressing than the Whitney Biennials is the critics who say, "Yes, it's bad, but this is what there is." When I go through those Biennials, my reaction is different. "Yes, this is bad," I think, "and it's bad because it excludes everything vital and exciting in contemporary art." Today the most radical thing that an artist can do is paint a tightly structured and internally coherent painting, yet there is not a major curator in the country who has the brains to recognize such work or the guts to support it. The real artists are still working. The tragedy is that they have no way of making contact with the audience that really cares.

What is to be done? The only solution is for people to begin to put back together the structures that have historically supported the visual arts in the United States. It is by no means clear that it can be done, but now, when so

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much of the art world is on its knees, is surely the time to begin. I can understand why the museums can't respond to all the dissatisfaction out there. The museums are largely in thrall to the money interests. But I still wonder why there isn't a new generation of private galleries that, beginning slowly and building on that tremendous stock of gifted artists who are now in their 30s and 40s, can't make a go of it. To be sure, it's harder than it was for Betty Parsons or Julien Levy; it costs so much more to run a dignified operation than it did forty or fifty years ago. But our best hope may still rest with the rise of a new generation of gallery owners who are independent and committed—who carry on in the great tradition of early-twentieth-century Paris and mid-century New York, when dealers knew what it meant to cast their lot with a community of artists. We need to rediscover the idea of the art dealer who is committed to the life of forms—the art dealer who is inspired by artists, who goes where they lead.

The greatest danger is the sense of hopelessness among the artists. The public art world has become such an overwhelmingly oppressive force in artists' lives that many of them have already given up hope that pictorial values will ever again have a public presence. Once upon a time a major artist was a person like Willem de Kooning, who came up through the ranks and never forgot that he was a part of a community of artists. Today a major artist is a person like Jeff Koons, who doesn't know that there is a community of artists and is proud of his ignorance. This is not a difference of degree. It is a difference of kind.

The art world has become the most glamorous wilderness imaginable, bewitching and numbing at the same time. It may be overstating the case to say that the future of art is in the balance. But most of the artists to whom I talk believe that we are living in very dark times. If the artists and the audience can confront the full extent of their alienation, maybe then people can begin to shake off that sense of hopelessness and things can begin to turn around. If it's going to happen, it will involve a lot of small acts of courage, all of them animated by a willingness to reject conventional taste and conventional wisdom all along the line. The artists who are committed to the life of art have to reestablish contact with the audience that hates the hype. It may no longer be possible, but the effort must be made. This is art's only chance. •

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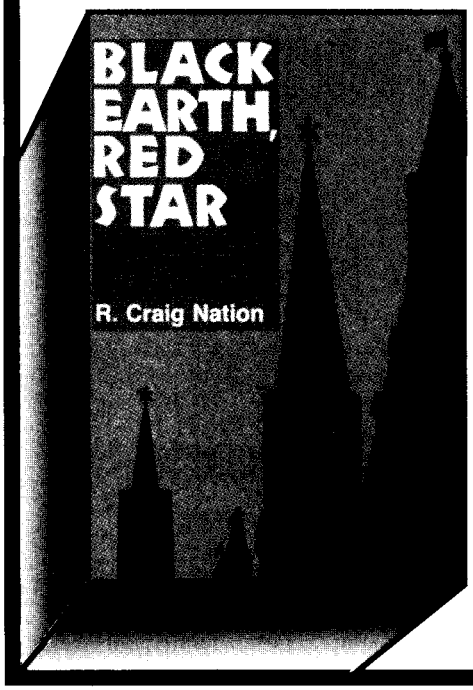

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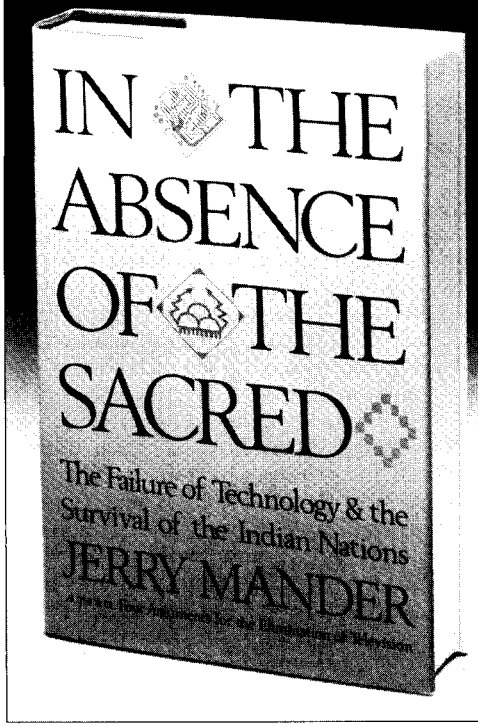

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The Toady

By Richard Pipes

The System: An Insider's Life in Soviet Politics by Georgi Arbatov

(Times Books, 380 pp., $25)

Ten years ago Georgi Arbatov, director of the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada in Moscow, published a book called *The Soviet Viewpoint.* Not *a* Soviet viewpoint but *the* Soviet viewpoint, to imply nothing less than that Arbatov was speaking for 250 million Soviet citizens. The book was a dialogue, produced in collaboration with a Dutch journalist named Willem Oltmans who submitted questions in writing and received the answers after Arbatov had cleared them with the appropriate authorities. The book appeared at a time when Moscow was deeply worried about the foreign policy of the Reagan administration, and its central theme was that the challenge to the Soviet system was futile as well as dangerous in that it threatened mutual annihilation.

Like everything that Arbatov said and wrote at the time, the uncompromising message was delivered in a tone of compromise, without a trace of ideological fanaticism. (An American reviewer even thought he was impersonating Cyrus Vance.) To establish his credentials as spokesman for all of the Soviet Union, Arbatov listed the honors that had been bestowed on him by his government: "Doctor of History ... full member of the Academy of Sciences ... full member of the Central Committee ... deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet ... the Order of Lenin, the Order of the October Revolution, the Order of the Red Star, two Orders of the Red Banner of Labor, and the Badge of Honor."

Short of being appointed to the Politburo, these are about as many distinctions as a Soviet citizen could conceivably aspire to. That they were merely political rewards may be inferred from the fact that Arbatov is not known to have produced any work that would qualify him for a doctorate in history, or to have made a contribution in any field of learning that would entitle him to a seat on the prestigious Academy of Sciences. In the Soviet system, as described by Arbatov in his latest book, such honors could be earned only by abject servility. In his case, they were due to the sponsorship of Yuri Andropov, then head of the KGB and, at the time *The Soviet Viewpoint* was published, Brezhnev's successor as first secretary of the Communist Party.

How nimble Arbatov can be is evidenced by his latest book, in which virtually nothing remains of his earlier views. Once a KGB-appointed spokesman for the Soviet people, he now appears in a new guise: a secret dissident in the corridors of power, a kind of liberal mole who all along struggled to bring democracy and reform to the Soviet Union. It is instructive to compare *The Soviet Viewpoint* with *The System.* In the old book, Stalin is mentioned only twice, once to have his oppressive regime blamed on Western hostility and once to receive praise for his "prudent" foreign policy. In the new book, there are no fewer than 255 references to Stalin and Stalinism, all of them negative ("ugly and bloodthirsty"). Then the invasion of Czechoslovakia went unmentioned; now it is referred to seventeen times, as an act that allegedly overcame the author "with burning shame." It is hard to believe that one and the same person wrote both books—unless, of course, you know something about the history of this person.

It was Andropov who launched the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada in 1967, the same year in which he took charge of the KGB. The Institute was ostensibly modeled on the various Russian and Soviet research centers in this country, but in fact it was, from the beginning, an intelligence center. It had the double function of gathering information and sowing disinformation. The former involved not so much hard intelligence in the form of concrete data as more diffuse material bearing on the mentality of influential American individuals and groups, which was to be used to improve the effectiveness of Soviet propaganda directed at the United States.

This propaganda effort, in which Arbatov played an important role, was a highly sophisticated operation. Like all good advertising, it targeted specific audiences. Thus it ignored the American Communist Party as too insignificant to bother about. It also steered clear of American trade unions, whose leadership, with minor exceptions, regarded Soviet Russia with repugnance as a vast forced labor camp. Instead it concentrated on three groups: businessmen, politicians, and intellectuals, for each of which it had a specific message, sweetened with the appropriate rewards.

To American businessmen, Moscow held out the prospect of spectacular deals, made credible by occasional contracts. Whenever possible, these transactions were crafted in a manner that would also bring political dividends, as in the case of Pepsi-Cola, whose chief executive officer, Donald Kendall, had close personal ties to Richard Nixon and fancied himself something of a Soviet expert. In the 1970s and 1980s, the business community, encouraged by Moscow, pressured successive American administrations to facilitate trade with the Soviet Union by granting it Most Favored Nation status, loosening restrictions on technology transfer, and facilitating Import-Export Bank guarantees. To its credit, Washington resisted these pressures, and since few corporations were willing to commit their own cash, U.S.-Soviet trade remained at a very low level.

Moscow also had favors to dispense to politicians. In an age of widespread fear of nuclear war, it was important for American politicians, in high office or aspiring to it, to be photographed in friendly intercourse with Soviet leaders. This would reassure American voters by conveying the impression that they, the American politicians and the Soviet officials, had found a common language. The Soviet embassy in Washington eagerly supplied legislators critical of American foreign policy with materials representative of the "Soviet view." And sometimes this friendly intercourse assumed shadier forms. Thus on June 24, 1992 *Izvestia* in Moscow published the text of an interesting document from the secret archives of the KGB involving Senator Edward Kennedy, who was always a welcome visitor to Arbatov's Institute. The stilted text, an internal KGB memorandum, reads, in its entirety, as follows:

> In 1978 the American Senator Edward Kennedy turned to the KGB with a request to help the firm "Agritech" (California) headed by ex-Senator J. Tunney, to establish contacts with Soviet organizations. This firm, in turn, is connected with the Franco-American firm "Finatech, S.A.," headed by the reliable KGB source, the prominent Western financier, D. Carr, with whose help, during the past several years, a confidential exchange of opinions has been carried on between the general secretary of the CPSU and Senator Edward Kennedy. D. Carr supplied the KGB with technical data about the situation in the USA and in other capital-

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ist countries, which was conveyed to the Central Committee of the CPSU.

The third, and the largest, target of Soviet propaganda was the American intelligentsia, particularly the American academy. Western intellectuals who would ostentatiously scorn any contacts with the CIA, who turned their backs on *Encounter* after it became known the CIA had financed it, felt no qualms sharing their thoughts with a front organization of the KGB. Special attention was paid to scientists, whose anxiety about the arms race was usually matched by their political innocence. They were courted at various international gatherings (Pugwash, Dartmouth, and so on) where Arbatov was a fixture and where they were made to feel like important players in global politics.

Unlike the 1920s, when Soviet propaganda sought to depict communism as an unprecedented attempt to set human destiny on a path of justice, peace, and prosperity, the new line was reasonable and realistic: of course communism had made mistakes and fallen short of its ambitious goals, but this was irrelevant, since what was at stake was the very survival of the human race. It was a trump card, brilliantly played. Nuclear terror performed the same function in Soviet foreign relations that police terror did in managing the population at home; that is, it was a means of demanding acquiescence.

In this effort Arbatov's Institute played a leading role. Its doors were always open to influential foreigners eager to meet face-to-face with what they thought were the makers of Soviet foreign policy, so that they could return home and trade on what they believed was an authoritative view of Soviet thinking. In reality, they met only with a motley group of retired generals and admirals and sundry academic specialists who neither knew what their leaders thought nor had any influence over them. The Russians politely heard the Americans out and in return ladled out whatever happened to be the current party line.

Although Arbatov does not list me among the visitors to his Institute, I was there in 1974. What struck me was that its members relied for their information on Western publications and on whatever gossip they picked up from their guests. It was apparent then—and Arbatov now confirms the correctness of this impression—that neither he nor his staff had access to classified information, and hence they remained in the dark about the Soviet military deployments that they so vigorously defended. (I recall the Institute's staff members during our discussion passing under the table, like schoolboys, the latest issue of the *Military Balance* put out by the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London and excitedly comparing the figures on American and Soviet arsenals.) Arbatov says that he first learned of the invasion of Afghanistan from Anatoly Dobrynin, who had heard the news over the radio, and that his knowledge of the deployment of Soviet SS-20s in Europe came from reading the Western press.

How little he knew then of the Soviet build-up is evident from his remarks about nuclear weapons. He now admits something that he previously hotly denied as a reactionary invention, namely that the Soviet Union strove for, and attained, nuclear superiority. "As far as nuclear arms are concerned," he writes, "we surpassed the Americans in the number of delivery systems, magatonnage, and throw weight in strategic arms, and also in medium-range weapons." In this matter, as in many others, his new book vindicates the so-called American "hard-liners" of the late '70s and '80s, and gives the lie to the Pugwash approach that in his heyday he so assiduously cultivated.

In those years it was evident, and again Arbatov confirms the impression,

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that he and his Institute had no influence on the conduct of Soviet policy. The principal advisor to the Soviet leadership on the United States was not Arbatov, but a shadowy bureaucrat named Andrei Alexandrov-Agentov who rarely met with foreigners. There is no reason to doubt Arbatov's claim that he, Arbatov, argued, frequently and vainly, against certain aggressive Soviet policies, such as supporting the Cubans in Angola and deploying the SS-20s in Europe. But it is equally evident that he did not advance his arguments on grounds of principle, as he pretends. He was moved, rather, by a tactical consideration, namely the belief that such actions needlessly alienated Western opinion, and thereby undermined his efforts at intellectual and psychological disarmament. This hardly entitles him to pose as a dissenter.

Which is precisely Arbatov's new pose. The purpose of *The System* is nothing less than to depict its author as one of the unsung heroes of the struggle against the Communist regime. While working on behalf of the Communist regime and enjoying commensurate perquisites, Arbatov was—if one is to believe his own account—quietly working to subvert it. His picture of the Soviet leadership, contained in the only interesting section of the book, is certainly devastating. Whereas in *The Soviet Viewpoint* he mourned the passing of Brezhnev as "a great loss," he portrays him in *The System* as a senile figurehead, doped around the clock by sedatives, whose favorite reading was the magazine *Circus*. Foreign policy between 1975 and 1982 was in the hands of the triumvirate of Gromyko, Ustinov, and Andropov, who, working closely with generals and managers of defense industries, operated on the zero-sum principle according to which anything that stuck it to the Americans was good and worth doing. Foreign policy took the form of a bloodless warfare that kept the Soviet population in a state of perpetual fear. "Frankly," Arbatov now concedes, "we embarked on an unprecedented propaganda campaign in those years trying to militarize the mentality of our people," even though there was no "looming military threat."

The only Soviet leader for whom this previously faithful servant of the system has a good word is his patron Andropov, whom he fondly remembers as a cultivated gentleman—intelligent, modest, selfless. He expresses gratitude to Andropov for having brought him in to work in the holy of holies, the Central Committee, despite the fact that his father was Jewish. (In earlier times Arbatov used to go to great lengths to conceal his ethnic origin, though it was an open secret.) It is more than likely that Arbatov was the source of the "inside" information about Andropov being a closet liberal that Jerry Hough and other Western Sovietologists and journalists disseminated after Brezhnev's death.

Arbatov owed much of his success as a gatherer of intelligence and a dispenser of disinformation to his appearance and manner. A pudgy, pipe-puffing, genial companion, he was hard to perceive as an enemy. He also learned brilliantly to mimic American liberals, to ingratiate himself by saying what his American partners wanted to hear and yet make it sound agreeably foreign, to employ just the right blend of idealism and cynicism. He reminded me of Otto Abetz, who was Ribbentrop's popular emissary to Parisian society in the 1930s, and after 1940, Hitler's ambassador to the Vichy government. Abetz had similarly pleaded with his superiors for a subtler policy toward France, and for much the same reasons. It would not surprise me if the well-informed Andropov modeled Arbatov on the Nazi original.

Arbatov was thoroughly at home in the United States—so thoroughly, in fact, that he felt at liberty to flout American visa regulations. In early 1981 he applied for a visa to attend a conference organized by Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. The Department of State, in consultation with me in my capacity as director of Soviet Affairs in the National Security Council, granted him entry for the duration of the conference, but it rejected his request for a longer stay. On his arrival in the United States, Arbatov simply ignored the expiration date of his visa and proceeded to make arrangements for lectures and television appearances after the conference had adjourned. He was asked to leave. Strobe Talbott, in his apologetic introduction, relying on Arbatov's self-serving account, writes that "the State Department cut short his visa to prevent him from being interviewed by Bill Moyers." In reality, his visa was not cut short: he was merely reminded that the United States was not a Peoples' Republic, and that he had better learn to obey its entry regulations.

The collapse of communism and the Soviet Union should have put an end to Arbatov's public career. It has done so in Russia, where he is held in equal contempt by the democrats as a collaborator and by the Communists as a turncoat. But people of his ilk always manage to land on their feet: the same skills that enabled him to navigate the rocky waters of Soviet politics have now helped him recover his position in America, where there is good money to be made. Arbatov long ago learned that in American public life what matters is not substance but "image," and he has redesigned himself to suit the post-Communist era. In this he has been so successful that he is once again wined and dined, interviewed and quoted, and treated as an authentic voice of the Russian people—indeed, as one of its liberators.

How can he justify such a switch? The answer is suggested by Marshall Shulman, the ex-director of Columbia University's Russian Institute, whom Talbott cites in his introduction. Arbatov, Shulman informs us,

> is a leading example of what I call the within-system modernizers who made the Second Russian Revolution possible.... Some became dissidents and suffered accordingly. Others, like Georgi Arbatov, worked from within. This is not to diminish the heroism of the ones, like Andrei Sakharov, who chose a more courageous path. But there was an osmotic relationship between the two groups....

It takes more of an effort of the imagination than I can muster to perceive an "osmotic relationship" between a collaborator with the KGB and its victims. But it is no wonder that Arbatov seizes the proffered hand, and goes one better:

> I pay tribute to the courage and fearlessness of those who, like Andrei Sakharov, risked taking an uncompromising stand. These people were heroes, even martyrs. And if

Relocation

It is, for me, a new variety of excess,
This kind that happens by the random whirl
Of one imprudent planet on its axis.
Or perhaps not so random. It isn't clear.
All I know is that mountains rise from somewhere
To startle listless cities to their feet,
That here I am on a provincial,
Undistinguished, unimagined street
And I have no desire to depart.
Is there a peculiar grace to accident?
Or is each borrowed landscape an entanglement
Insinuating as the white, subtle
Elbows of these mountains as they cradle
In their thin, blue folds a shifting heart?

JACQUELINE OSHEROW

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they had not done what they did, I think the changes in our country would not have gone forward so quickly. But had it not been for the many hundreds and thousands who worked inside the system, fought routine skirmishes, tried to stop the pressure of Stalinist conservatism, and defended and promoted the ideas of democracy and peaceful economic reform, the process of revitalization would not have been possible at all.

So now we know: Sakharov, Orlov, Bukovsky, Amalrik, and the many other casualties of the system accelerated the collapse of communism, but communism was really brought down by the Arbatovs and its other loyal minions. The publisher calls this book "monumental." And so it is, in its impudence.

RICHARD PIPES is Baird Professor of History at Harvard University and author of *The Russian Revolution* (Vintage).

Patterns of Prejudice

BY JAMES M. MCPHERSON

Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s by Tyler Anbinder

(Oxford University Press, 352 pp., $39.95)

The meteoric rise of the "Know Nothings" in 1854 and their equally spectacular fall less than two years later are among the most puzzling phenomena in American political history. Congressional and state elections in the North were marked by unprecedented upheaval in 1854. Having carried all but two free states in 1852, the Democrats lost all but two of those states two years later. Of ninety-one incumbent free-state Democratic congressmen, sixty-six went down to defeat. The presumed cause of this debacle was a voter backlash against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which Democrats had rammed through Congress with southern votes and the heavy-handed party discipline of Senator Stephen A. Douglas and President Franklin A. Pierce.

This act repealed the earlier ban on slavery, established by the Missouri Compromise of 1820, in certain territories north of 36° 30'. Coming after the annexation of Texas as a huge new slave state in 1845, and after the Compromise of 1850, which opened to slavery the territories in the Southwest acquired from Mexico, the Kansas-Nebraska Act seemed one more st[illegible] in the onward march of the slave power. "Anti-Nebraska" coalitions arose in the North to rally voters to the free-soil principle of the containment of slavery. Thirty-seven of the forty-four northern congressmen who had bowed to party discipline and voted for the Kansas-Nebraska Act failed to get reelected. From this political ferment was born the Republican party, whose election of Abraham Lincoln as the party's first president on an anti-slavery platform six years later provoked the South into secession and war.

Political historians have focused on the elections of 1854 as the end of the "Second Party System," a period of twenty-five years in which the Whig and Democratic parties competed in a relatively stable two-party environment. But the controversy over the Mexican War and the Compromise of 1850 had mortally wounded the Whigs in the South, where they seemed insufficiently ardent in their commitment to the expansion of slavery and "Southern Rights." And the convulsion of 1854 ironically crippled the Whigs in the North, where they seemed insufficiently anti-slavery.

Still, the new Republican party was not the main beneficiary of this upheaval—or so it appeared at first. Up from the great deep came a tidal wave of nativism that threatened to swamp Whigs, Democrats, and Republicans alike. "Nearly everybody appears to have gone deranged on Nativism," reported a Pennsylvania Democrat, while a Whig in upstate New York likewise warned that his district was "badly infected with Knownothingism." Described as a "tornado," a "hurricane," a "freak of political insanity," these Know Nothings won landslide victories in Massachusetts and Delaware, a majority in Maine, 40 percent of the vote in Pennsylvania, and substantial totals elsewhere. By the end of 1855 they had elected eight governors, and more than 100 congressmen owed their election in part to Know-Nothing support.

Who were these mysterious Know Nothings? What did they stand for? Why did they do so well in 1854-1855—and then virtually disappear? These ques-

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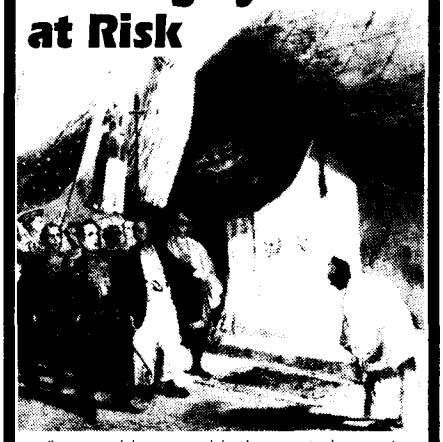

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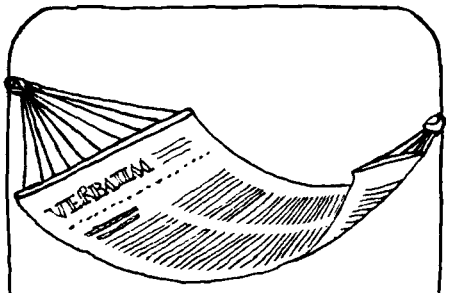

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tions are addressed in Tyler Anbinder's perceptive book—the first full-scale study of the Know Nothings in the North. (W. Darrell Overdyke's *The Know-Nothing Party in the South* was published in 1950.) The political manifestation of "nativism," or hostility toward immigrants, the Know Nothings have figured more or less prominently in traditional histories of the antebellum era. Most such scholarship, however, concentrated on the slavery-generated sectional conflict that led to civil war. Because nativism seemed to play little if any part in that process, and because the Know Nothing party (or the American party, as it was formally called) was so short-lived, traditional scholarship tended to dismiss the Know Nothings as an inexplicable aberration from mainstream politics.

But in the 1960s a group calling themselves "new political historians" rediscovered nativism, and placed it at the center of their explanation of American political behavior. They maintained that neither slavery, nor class conflict, nor economic and regional interest groups fueled American politics. It was "ethnocultural" issues that voters really cared about: temperance, Sunday closing laws, Bible reading in the schools, public schools vs. parochial schools, and clashes on all that now gets lumped under the label "values." Voting blocs defined themselves in relation to "negative reference groups": Catholics against Protestants; Irish against Yankees; Wets against Drys; immigrants against natives. Thus the rise of the nativist anti-Catholic Know Nothings was not an aberration; it was the norm.

The ethnocultural historians have rightly called our attention to the pervasiveness of such prejudices in American politics, from the anti-French hysteria of the 1790s to the family-values debate of 1992. Immigration policy has frequently been a divisive issue, and immigrants have often been victims of suspicion, discrimination, and sometimes violence. During the early nineteenth century, immigration was less salient than in most other periods of American history. The total number of immigrants in the whole decade of the 1820s amounted to only 1 percent of the American population, rising to barely 4 percent in the 1830s. More than three-quarters of these newcomers were Protestants, mainly from Britain and Northern Ireland. Most of them were skilled workers, farmers, or members of white-collar occupations.

In the 1840s, however, several factors caused a sudden quadrupling in the volume of immigration and a change in its social composition. The potato blight in Ireland and the pressure of population on resources in Germanic regions of Europe drove millions of Irish and German peasants to emigrate. Most of them came to the United States, where recovery from an economic depression in the early 1840s launched an economic boom and a demand for labor. During the decade between 1845 and 1855, 3 million immigrants entered the country, more than in the preceding seven decades combined; and they comprised 15 percent of the total American population, the highest proportion for any decade in our history. By 1855, immigrants outnumbered natives in several of the largest cities. Most of them were poor, unskilled, Irish, sometimes unruly—and Catholic.

Anti-Catholicism had deep roots in Anglo-America. Bloody Mary, Guy Fawkes Day, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 were deeply seared in the folk memory; John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* could be found alongside the King James Bible in many Protestant homes. Fear of the Pope and of the Roman church as autocratic threats to republicanism was never far from the surface of American political culture. Several ethnic riots between Protestant and Irish Catholic workers erupted in the 1840s, culminating in pitched battles and numerous deaths in Philadelphia in 1844. Short-lived nativist parties sprang up in several eastern cities with a platform of curbing the political rights of immigrants.

Ethnic tensions declined for several years after the return of prosperity in 1844, but rose again as the vast increase of immigration seemed too much for the country to absorb. Clashes of values as well as economic and social conflicts rose dramatically. The temperance crusade had reduced drinking among native-born Protestants, but made little impact on Irish and Germans, who organized much of their social and political life around taverns and beer parlors. Native-born workers blamed a decline of real wages in the mid-1850s on cheap-labor competition from immigrants. Old Americans perceived newer Americans as responsible for a sharp rise in crime and poverty. Cincinnati's crime rate tripled between 1846 and 1853 (its murder rate increased sevenfold). Most of the arrested criminals were foreign-born. Boston's expenditures for poor relief tripled during this period, and nearly all the recipients were Irish. Other cities had similar experiences. In the mid-1850s ethnic riots left ten dead in St. Louis, seventeen dead in Baltimore, twenty-two dead in Louisville.

The main targets of nativist hostility were not so much immigrants as Catholics, especially Irish Catholics. Indeed, some of the most intense "nativists" were Protestant immigrants from Northern Ire-

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land. The Roman Catholic hierarchy did little to allay nativist fears. Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) revived the doctrine of papal infallibility and led the church into a period of reaction against secular liberalism. The papacy sided with counterrevolutionary forces that crushed the uprisings of 1848 and their campaign for greater social and political democracy in Europe.

Archbishop John Hughes of New York, the leading American Catholic prelate, took his cue from the Pope and attacked abolitionists, free soilers, and various Protestant reform movements as kin to the "Red Republicanism" of Europe. In 1850 Hughes gave a widely-publicized address called "The Decline of Protestantism and Its Causes." Noting that membership in the Catholic church was growing three times as fast as Protestant membership, Hughes predicted an eventual Catholic majority in the United States and vowed that he would not rest until every American had become a Catholic. In 1853 Monsignor Gaetano Bedini came to the United States as a papal nuncio to adjudicate disputes in several dioceses about lay and clerical control of church property. Notorious among liberals as the "Butcher of Bologna" for his role in suppressing republicanism in that city, Bedini lent color to nativist fantasies about a papal plot to take over America.

One of the most inflammatory issues in local and state politics during the 1850s was temperance, which was often translated into stereotyped images pitting blue-nosed Yankee Puritans against hard-drinking Irish brawlers. Another explosive subject was education. Catholics protested the reading of the King James Bible in public schools. Archbishop Hughes also flayed public schools as nurseries of "Socialism, Red Republicanism, Universalism, Infidelity, Deism, Atheism, and Pantheism." In 1852 the first Plenary Council of American bishops decided to seek tax support for Catholic parochial schools. This set off heated elections in northern municipalities in which "Free School" tickets fought the "bold effort" of this "despotic faith" to "uproot the tree of Liberty" and "substitute the mitre for our liberty cap."

All of these controversies came to a head in 1854, when the Know Nothings burst onto the scene. A strange mixture of fraternal lodge and political party, this group had grown out of a merger in 1852 of two secret societies that restricted their membership to native-born Protestants: The Order of the Star-Spangled Banner and the Order of United Americans. As late as May 1854, national membership was only 50,000. But it soared to at least a

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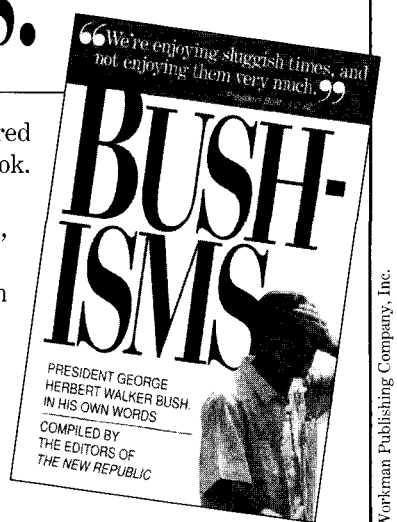
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million in the next six months.

The Order pledged members to vote for certain candidates who generally supported temperance and opposed tax support for parochial schools. It also opposed the rising political power of immigrants, who had begun to dominate the Democratic party in some locales. In Boston, for example, the number of foreign-born voters (mostly Irish) increased by 200 percent from 1850 to 1855, while the number of native-born voters grew by only 14 percent. Nativists wanted to restrict office to native-born men and to lengthen the naturalization period before immigrants could become citizens and voters from five to twenty-one years. Members were pledged to secrecy about the Order. If asked, they were to reply, "I know nothing."

Although the Know Nothings drew voters from both major parties in the North, they cut more heavily into the Whigs than the Democrats. This is the central fact underpinning the argument of the ethnocultural historians that it was nativism, not the opposition to slavery, that destroyed the Second Party System by doing in the Whig party. The argument is plagued, however, by some rather intractable problems. Despite the "tornado" of Know Nothing success in 1854-1855, it was the Republican party, not the American party, that emerged as the Democrats' principal rival in the North by 1856. And the Republican party's platform, its raison d'etre, was the restriction of slavery's expansion as the first step, in Lincoln's words, toward placing it "in course of ultimate extinction." By 1856 the Republicans had gained the allegiance of most former Know Nothings. They won 46 percent of the free-state popular vote in 1856, compared with only 13 percent for the American party. By that time the American party had migrated South, where it won 44 percent of the vote for president in 1856, having picked up the support of former southern Whigs who could not bring themselves to vote Democratic.

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How did this happen? If nativism rather than antislavery was truly the more powerful political force in the North, how did the Republican tail come to wag the Know-Nothing dog? It did so, according to ethnocultural historians such as Michael Holt, Joel Silbey, and William Gienapp, by cleverly co-opting the nativists into a party that blended nativism and antislavery in more or less equal portions. It is true that the same dynamic cultural forces of the Protestant Second Great Awakening a generation earlier, the forces that generated moral reform movements like abolition and temperance, also fueled anti-Catholicism. Since "Roman Catholicism and slavery" were both "founded and supported on the basis of ignorance and tyranny," resolved a Know-Nothing convention in Massachusetts, "there can exist no real hostility to Roman Catholicism which does not embrace [hostility to] slavery."

But something is askew in this portrait of a nativist Republican party. John C. Frémont, its presidential candidate in 1856, had a Catholic father, was married by a Catholic priest, and sent his daughter to a convent school. The Republicans made a concerted bid for the German-American vote in 1860, and won enough of it in crucial states to make a perhaps decisive impact on the outcome. The Republican platform in 1860 explicitly opposed "any change in our naturalization laws or any state legislation by which the rights of citizens ... from foreign lands shall be abridged or impaired." And Lincoln was on record repudiating the Know-Nothing creed: "How can anyone who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people?" Other Republicans made the same point. Since "we are against Black Slavery, because the slaves are deprived of human rights," they declared, "we are also against ... [this] system of Northern Slavery to be created by disenfranchising the Irish and the Germans." In the eyes of many Republicans, nativism was a red herring that distracted attention from the real danger to the country. "Neither the Pope nor the foreigners ever can govern the country or endanger its liberties," wrote one, "but the slavebreeders and slavetraders *do* govern it."

Tyler Anbinder has solved the mystery of how the antislavery tail could wag the nativist dog. He has accomplished this feat by switching the dog and the tail. "Slavery, not nativism, destroyed the second American party system," he writes. For one thing, it was the slavery issue that fatally weakened the Whig party in the South before Know Nothings had ever been heard of. And in 1854 perhaps half of the former northern Whigs voted for Republicans or for one of the other anti-Nebraska coalition parties rather than for the Know Nothings.

Anbinder's main contribution, though, is to demonstrate that the primary motive of many Know-Nothing voters was in fact the opposition to slavery. It was no coincidence that the explosive growth of Know-Nothing membership came in the six months after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in May 1854. Already organized in hundreds of lodges in northern states, with a membership that was largely antislavery as well as nativist, the Know Nothings were positioned to attract new members for candidates that they secretly endorsed before other new antislavery coalitions could organize.

"Slavery played the key role in transforming the Know Nothings from a small nativist organization into a national political power," Anbinder maintains. "The belief that the Order would oppose the extension of slavery drew many members to Know Nothing lodges." Moreover, as one veteran of these political wars later explained, the Know Nothings served mainly as "a *half-way house—a stopping place on the road*" to a new party. And indeed, Know Nothing platforms in several northern states did call for repeal of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. "Many Free Soilers," notes Anbinder, "cast Know Nothing ballots because they thought they could wrest control of the Order from veteran nativists, and use it as the foundation for an anti-slavery party."

That is precisely what they did in several states. In sometimes mind-numbing detail, Anbinder chronicles the conventions, the elections, and the political manipulations of 1855-1856, by which antislavery Republicans picked up most northern Know-Nothing voters on an antislavery platform with no significant concessions to nativism in return. Shell-shocked nativists scarcely understood what happened, but they did perceive that "the cursed question of '*slavery*' is at the bottom of all our troubles." The profound issue of the 1850s, the question that went to the heart of American identity and defined the future course of the country, was the issue laid out by Lincoln in his "House Divided" address: "This government cannot endure, permanently, half *slave* and half *free*. It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other." The editor of a nativist newspaper admitted ruefully in 1856 that

> all political action, all political principles ... begins and ends with Slavery. It is the Alpha and Omega of every sect, every party, and every creed. It controls every Southern vote, is the burthen of every Southern speech ... and we of the North must be, are compelled, whether we will or not, to be for it or against it. ... We have struggled against this conviction till we can struggle no longer.

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This fine book steers the study of antebellum politics back on course from the diversion of ethnocultural historians. To be sure, nativism remained a cultural force that found a political home mainly in the Republican party. But Anbinder has enabled us to understand why the Civil War was fought between North and South, not between natives and immigrants or Protestants and Catholics, and why the Republicans of that generation abolished slavery but did little if anything to abridge the rights of immigrants or Catholics. Still, if the United States avoided a bloodbath of "ethnic cleansing" in the 1850s, the deadly persistence of such tribal feuds in all parts of the world should alert us to dangers that still lurk just below the surface of our culture and politics.

JAMES M. MCPHERSON is George Henry Davis Professor of American History at Princeton University and the author most recently of *Abraham Lincoln: The Second American Revolution* (Oxford University Press).

Less Than Hero

BY ALEXANDER STAR

The Secret History by Donna Tartt

(Knopf, 524 pp., $23)

Although the university is one of America's last competitive assets, most of our campus fiction arrives from abroad. Still, readers must reckon with such homemade goods as the "Bennington novel"—a casually interlinked corpus of work produced by Bret Easton Ellis and Jill Eisenstadt in the mid-'80s. Matching a minimal prose style to an even more minimal human understanding, Ellis and Eisenstadt retailed myths of collegiate decadence to readers hungry for news of a purportedly lost generation. Where campus satires once picked on the faculty, their up-to-date reports focused on the students, or at least on the heavily aerobicized and anesthetized student body. The predictable result was instant notoriety, and Hollywood.

But the Bennington novel may be entering a new phase, or at least Donna Tartt, whose first book is dedicated to her classmate Ellis, has written something different. *The Secret History* is an elaborately conceived and artistically ambitious thriller that turns not on the quest for tenure or pills, but on such matters as "... unpunished, innocence destroyed, and evil passing itself as good." The narrator, Richard Papen, is a modest young man from a modest Californian home who is burdened with a "marked longing for the picturesque" and a compulsion to "make interesting people good." Arriving at Hampden College in Vermont, he dreams of "cellos; bleak windowpanes; snow." Before long he is moved by an even more picturesque sight: the school's classics students, with their foppish dress and forbidding ways, stand out from "the throngs of hippies and beatniks and preppies and punks" like Evelyn Waugh characters lost in a Fox sitcom. Led by the tall, umbrella-toting Henry Winter, they worship their professor Julian Morrow, a famed classicist devoted to educating the "smooth-cheeked, soft-skinned, well-educated, and rich." It is not long before Richard joins them.

Tartt succeeds in coaxing plausible anxieties out of implausible circumstances. Inspired by their tutor to purge the "burden of self," Richard's companions practice Bacchic rites in the woods. Hampden's motto is "Learn by Doing," and while Morrow's austere paternalism hardly matches the school ethos, he unwittingly impels his students to carry out the maxim with his talk of divine madness and the beauty of terror. In the midst of one of these rituals, a local farmer is inexplicably murdered and mutilated. Richard becomes aware of the deed, as does Bunny Corcoran, an amiable shambles of a boy with little aptitude for Greek but a genius for teasing his friends and spending their trust funds. When Bunny's hectoring ways become an intolerable burden to the group, they resolve to kill him.

None of the cast is a very credible mystagogue, and the accounts of their chiton-clad evenings are not especially convincing: "You saw Dionysus, I suppose?" But Tartt rapidly proceeds to more promising topics—crime and concealment, the waning of moral restraints, the escalation of dread. Friendly and fidgety, exasperating but not bad, Bunny is an unlikely sac-

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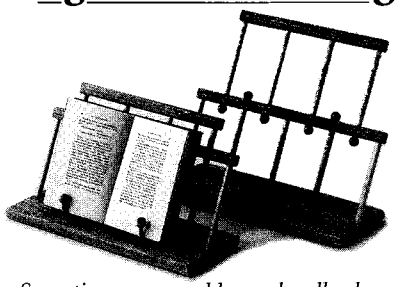

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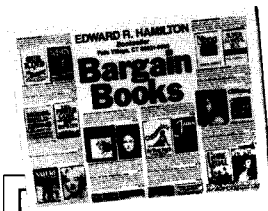

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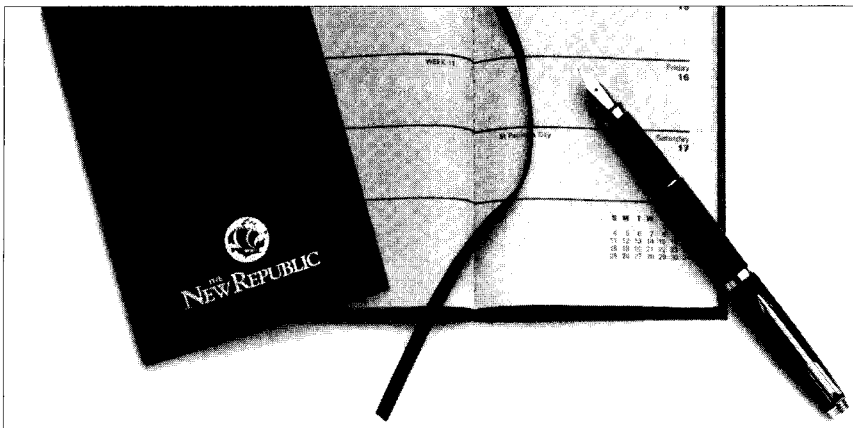

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rificial victim, and the cover-up of his murder becomes a bruising business for the group. The psychic toll of their unknown crime is a descent into despondency and madness. It is the accumulation of these troubles, narrated with detached foreboding, that gives the book its slow, creeping force.

Tartt handles suspense with care. In one well-paced episode, Richard waits interminably for Morrow to flip over a piece of stationery and discover a vital clue. This scene not only slyly parodies its own page-turning momentum but also adequately summarizes Tartt's method: the brisk pace of dialogue and description clashes with delayed gratification of the reader's desire. Richard's understated disclosures hold the melodrama in check throughout, although the reader does catch an occasional whiff of scented undergraduate ink—"the gloomy boudoir of my dreams."

Tartt's larger ambition, only partly realized, is to contrast the "narrow, relentless" force of classical literature with the "whimsical, discursive" surfaces of modern writing. Richard is fascinated with ancient Greek, a "language obsessed with action, and with the joy of seeing action multiply from action." He wonders again and again if his fate was foreordained; if anything could have reversed the "rapid progression of events." But he also inhabits a fantasy world of blurred colors and forgotten deeds in which murder is merely "a dropped stone falling to the lake bed with scarcely a ripple." "Any action, in the fullness of time," he hopes, "sinks to nothingness." He broods over whether the murder was "selfish" and "evil" or merely "wild" and "picturesque," over whether he was someone's "alarm bell" or simply a "bystander." Divided against himself, he rambles back and forth between two worlds—Hampden's tedious partygoers with their "diabolical rap" and his own haunted and high-minded friends.

Contrasting the solid and the shadowy, the consequential and the ephemeral, Tartt scatters objective correlatives to Richard's confusion throughout her book. The fall landscape, crisply etched, is set against the "glorious blur" of landmarks suddenly associated with the murder, spots where the world has gone out of focus. For the most part these competing languages are placed side by side, but they abruptly join in a description of Bunny, around whose corpse all of these words grow: "Viewed from a distance his character projected an impression of solidity and wholeness which was in fact as insubstantial as a hologram; up close, he was all motes and light, you could pass

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your hand right through him. . . ."

Richard's double vision creates a more graceful patterning of image and idea than one expects to see on such a high-speed trip. But Tartt does not really do justice to either of the literary modes that she employs. She is too busy managing her narrative economy, rationing secrets and suspense according to the thriller's laws of supply and demand. Some of her vignettes of oddball professors and ordinary nihilists are musty (Professor L[illegible]rgue, forever on the watch for "enemies" in his department); others are more amusing ("Oh you know Flipper. . . . Everybody called her Flipper because she flipped over her dad's Volvo, like, four times freshman year"). But they are all a little like music piped in to cover a change in scenery; they are designed to distract, not to reveal. And her open-ended conclusion notwithstanding, Tartt relies on a tired moral—the categorical imperative, Bennington style. Henry's error is not to crave divine madness, but to regard others only as obstacles in his way. He hoists himself coolly above the law: Bunny's death was, after all, simply a "redistribution of matter." "Never once," Richard writes, "did it occur to me that any of this was anything but a game."

Tartt presumably wants to expose this stance, to communicate the peril of judging others and oneself by intellectual and aesthetic standards alone. Dividing her characters into the frivolous and the cunning, she takes aim at both the shallow narcissists and the icy egoists among them. But the chilling arrogance of young Nietzscheans—or, in this case, Dionysians—is an overworked theme, especially after Hitchcock's *Rope*. Most of her creations are stand-up targets, heavily painted with the colors of New England autumn. A hint of self-conscious play-acting clings to their actions. The evil in the woods seems merely the pretense of evil; Richard's anguish, the pretense of guilt.

Tartt records the aftereffects of unpunished crime with great skill. But her efforts to transform a chronicle of suspense into a study in sensibility are less successful. Dostoyevskian turmoil does not relocate easily to contemporary V[illegible]mont, and the stage-props of ancient Greece don't make the trip any smoother. Even the refusal of moral resolution can become a smug gesture (as recent films by Woody Allen and Robert Altman have inadvertently demonstrated). Like her Bennington peers, Tartt offers the aroma of decadence, not its anatomy; stylish intimations of misbehavior, not visions of hell. She leaves her hero hanging out at the abyss, admiring his new sneakers. •

TRB *continued from page 6*

Bush's list as clearly essential to serious budget discipline, rather than accusing Bush of endorsing them. But it surely is fair game for a candidate to take his opponent's promises, however absurd, at face value. That's what Clinton has done. And in any event, such campaign disingenuousness is hardly the same kind of outright deceit as the 128-to-1 charge.

The New York Times actually gave Fred Malek almost half the op-ed page for his list of 128 alleged Clinton tax and fee increases. Malek implies this is the same list the Bushies have been peddling all along. "On every substantive item, our list's critics got their facts wrong. They accused us of double counting, when we were being scrupulous in avoiding that pitfall. . . ."

Malek indeed is famous for his counting skills. He once counted the Jews in the Bureau of Labor Statistics, on orders from President Nixon. But this list has been patched up. The three "items" that were essentially blank have been replaced. The item that was listed twice—a 25-cents-a-gallon tax increase on light wines—has been split into two separate taxes on "native" and "out of state" light wines. That raises to eight the number of separate items squeezed out of a single 1987 booze tax increase. But many old favorites are still there, such as the "tax increase" that consists of an extension of the dog racing season.

(The Clinton people, in an excess of scrupulousness, have produced their own list of 127 tax and fee increases. It throws out some of the more obvious ringers and eliminates the most egregious double-counting, but throws in some trivial fees that the Republicans overlooked.)

Malek doesn't even attempt to defend the really big lie: that, in contrast to Clinton, Bush raised taxes only once. The Clintonites have produced a list of 178 tax and fee increases signed by President Bush. That's thirty-five more than I found, and means that Bush in his four years was signing tax increases at more than quadruple the rate of Governor Clinton in his twelve. No one has challenged the accuracy of this list. Bush's 1990 booze tax increase, by the way, counts as just one item, not eight.

And wait. It gets even better. In Bush's 1993 budget request, there are eleven proposed tax increases and thirty proposed new fees. The total is about $35 billion over five years. So Bush has already broken his recent promise that he would never—"ever, ever"—break his no-new-taxes pledge again.

These forty-one tax and fee increases are Bush's own proposal—nothing that has been forced on him by Congress. As recently as mid-September, Bush's budget office was scolding Congress for failure to enact his proposed inspection fee for hospitals and nursing homes. Some items on Bush's list are remarkably similar to items on Clinton's—such as a proposed "fee" for convicted criminals to help finance the justice system.

Of course this silly battle over the number of tax increases says nothing meaningful about the tax level in Arkansas or the United States, let alone the larger issue of Clinton's and Bush's economic stewardship. But Bush is the one who made the false point about 128-to-1, as if it was significant. So he's stuck with the true comparison. And you can use this controversy to judge the other allegations Bush is flinging around about Clinton's Arkansas tenure. As always, the real issue isn't taxes. The issue, as Bush says, is trust.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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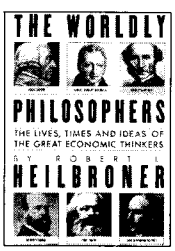

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

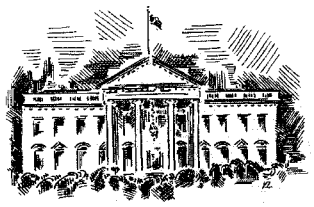
The chosen

IF I'D KNOWN THEY WOULD BE looking for volunteers, I wouldn't have taken a chair on the aisle. Sitting in synagogue on Rosh Hashanah, listening to the rabbi's lengthy sermon on the day's Torah reading, I felt a hand on my shoulder. "Come on," the elderly gentleman with a blue "usher" ribbon pinned to his lapel whispered, leaning in next to my ear. "You'll make the next aliyah." I wondered if I was being shipped off to Israel. What the usher was asking me to do was really quite simple. I'd go to the pulpit, stand at a table a few steps from the ark in which the Torah scrolls are kept, recite a short Hebrew blessing before and after a portion of the Torah reading, and sit down. No problem.

AS THE USHER USHERED ME TOward the front of the sanctuary, however, my intestines began to roll. Each step jarred loose another hideous memory of the various "mishaps" that have befallen me over the years whenever I've come within chanting distance of a pulpit. Let me be clear. This was not stage fright. I don't have that. And it wasn't a mere phobia. A phobia is an irrational fear of a nonexistent danger. My fear was rational. The danger real. My mother has pictures. Whatever the term for it, the chief symptom is the same: acute humiliation, invariably before large crowds of Jews.

THERE WAS, FOR INSTANCE, THE time I got stuck in the ark. I was 9 years old, sitting in Hebrew school class. My desk was next to a wooden ark that contained Torah scrolls for student services on Saturday mornings. While the teacher lectured the class on the significance of the Passover seder, my left hand wandered up the side of the ark to meet a small air hole bored in one of its panels. The hole, I discovered, was just large enough to fit my fourth finger. And just small enough to keep it. Once in, I couldn't get it out. I tugged a little. My finger swelled a little. I tugged more. It swelled more. The bell rang. Class ended. Frantic, I called out to my teacher, who, after pushing and pulling, called the principal. Who called the executive director. Who called the custodian. Who tried soap, hand lotion, and petroleum jelly. Students and teachers assembled to watch the proceedings and offer suggestions. Then came the sirens. The executive director, an easily agitated man, had summoned the fire department. And someone had tipped off my mother, who arrived in a panic. The firemen had a chainsaw. They cut a circle around my finger, leaving me wearing a six-inch round of ark wood like a doughnut. One of the firemen put my ringed finger in a vice; with a few delicate hacksaw strokes I was free, and relatively unscathed. The same can't be said for the ark, which now bears a considerably larger air hole.

THAT WAS JUST THE BEGINNING. On the day of my Bar Mitzvah, as I stepped up to the pulpit to begin leading the morning service, the contact lens in my right eye popped out. I might have continued one- eyed, but just then the left lens slipped out of place and lodged under my eyelid, causing my eyes to water uncontrollably. After leading me to a chair, my father began scrounging around for the lost lens (he found it), while I poked at my eyeball in an attempt to extract the other. Meanwhile, the cantor stepped in to begin the service. A few years later, I so badly botched the reading of a portion of the Torah during a Saturday morning service that the rabbi turned to the cantor and whispered, "Should we do that one over again?" The next year I was an usher at a cousin's wedding. The ceremony was long. The room was hot. I was dressed in a wool tuxedo. As the rabbi blessed my cousin and his bride, my legs buckled and I passed out on the floor, nearly taking an elaborate flower arrangement down with me. My trusty father once again dragged me out of sight, this time on my heels.



AT THE TIME, I BEGAN TO TAKE MY recurring mishaps as a sign that maybe I should ditch my plans to become a rabbi, a career that I seriously considered for a time. For a short while I took to wearing a yarmulke and fringes, attempted to steep myself in Talmud, and enrolled in Hebrew High classes at night. But when both my Hebrew teacher and my rabbi—the same rabbi, incidentally, who'd attempted to pull my finger out of the ark and who'd been present at my Bar Mitzvah—gently suggested that perhaps I should consider pursuing other work, I took heed.

BUT MY AFFLICTION CONTINUED to dog me even outside the synagogue. Last year, for instance, I was approached by a woman as I thumbed through the fiction section in a Washington bookstore. The woman wore a scarf on her head and carried a large bag over her shoulder. The store was crowded, and I didn't pay much attention to her as I absentmindedly picked up Chaim Potok's novel *The Gift of Asher Lev.* Moments later, she was angling into my face. "That's an evil book, you know," she said, pointing to the volume in my hands. Her eyes flickered. Usually I enjoy these sorts of impromptu encounters. I know the feeling of not being able to resist unleashing an unsolicited opinion on a stranger. So she wasn't a Potok fan. I thanked her for the tip. Apparently, I didn't get it. She wasn't anywhere near through with Potok. Or with me. "A terrible, terrible book," she said. "He glorifies them." *Who?* "Potok. He tries to make the Hasidim into heroes." Her voice took on a fearsome edge as she explained, for everyone in the store to hear, how such books as *The Chosen* and *My Name is Asher Lev* are part of a worldwide conspiracy by ultra-orthodox Jews to kill her. "They want me dead!" she bellowed, snatching the book from my hands and setting it back on the display table. I tried to calm her, but by this time I'd drifted too far past the buoys to swim away. O.K., I asked, *why are they trying to kill you?* "Because I am the product of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage!" she shrieked, fishing a four-page newsletter from her bag. "The Hasidim want us off the face of the earth!" She handed me the newsletter, the official publication of Pareve: the Alliance for the Adult Children of Jewish-Gentile Intermarriage. (Pareve is the Hebrew word for food that is neither dairy nor meat.) Then she was gone. Embarrassed, I slinked out of the store; Potok lost a sale. A week later curiosity got the best of me and I called the number on the newsletter. It had been disconnected.

THERE WAS, OF COURSE, NO TIME to explain all of this to the usher as he led me to the front of the room. Instead, I ascended the stairs, recited the blessing, and ... nothing. The words came. My voice didn't crack. My eyes stayed dry. The scrolls remained intact. A flurry of tropes and I was shaking hands with the rabbi. Perhaps, I thought, I shouldn't have given up my rabbinical pursuits so hastily after all. Then I saw it. There, in the lower corner of the ark, a rough-hewn wooden one with heavy doors, was a knothole. Not a large one; just large enough, say, to fit a finger.

WESTON KOSOVA

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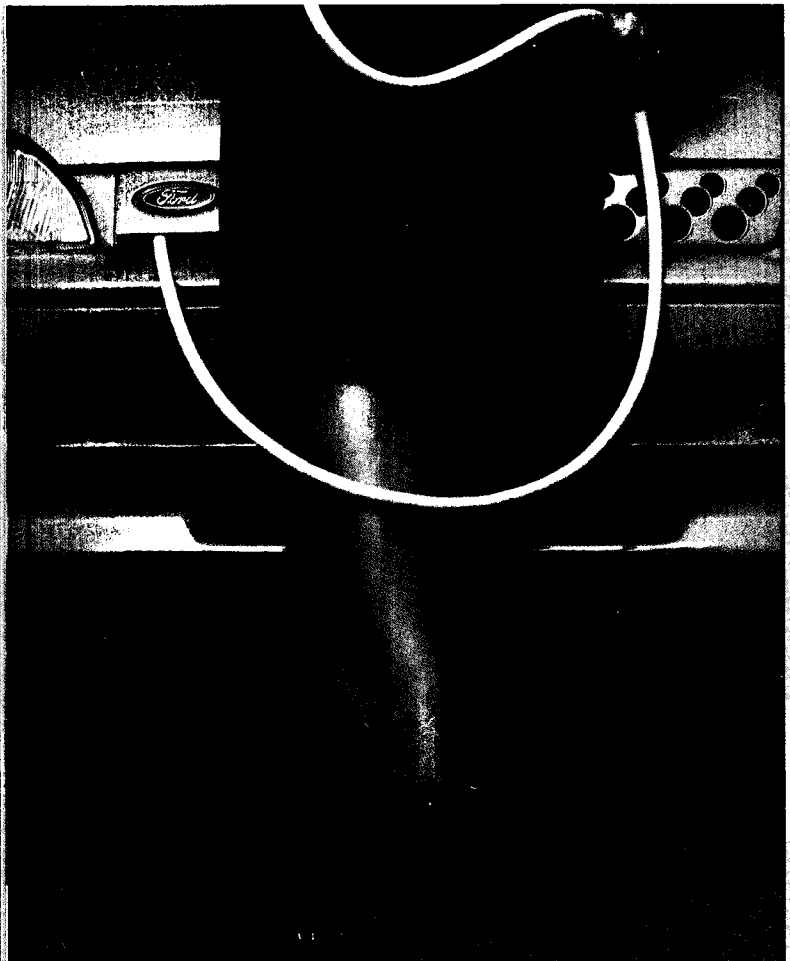

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